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**HORACE AUSTIN WARNER TABOR**

*From the original, through the courtesy of the  
State Historical Society of Colorado*

# THE TABORS

## *A Footnote of* Western History

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By LEWIS CASS GANDY

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*Illustrated with*  
CONTEMPORARY WOODCUTS

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## PREFACE

IT IS DOUBTFUL if the name of any Colorado pioneer has so often appeared in print as that of H. A. W. Tabor. Unknown to fame until approaching the age of fifty, chance suddenly brought him great wealth and a considerable reputation. A few years later and another throw of the dice as quickly returned him to his former obscurity. These sudden and dramatic changes in his career made him a figure on which newspaper and other writers have dwelt at considerable length. Little research was given to such narratives, and as a result so many legends have sprung up since his death that now it is difficult to determine the truth.

While Tabor was not a great man, judged by present-day standards, he was far from being the sort of individual he has frequently been pictured. During his lifetime he was often vilified and ridiculed by those envious of his easily acquired wealth, as well as by others who had political axes to grind. These old stories, and the idle gossip of many who pretend to have known him intimately, have been seized upon by modern writers and put forth as giving a truthful picture of the man. In too many of these hasty sketches, and in a recent full-length biography remarkable for its inaccuracy, Tabor is pictured as a fool, an ignoramus, or a scoundrel.

He was none of these.

True, he did many things which were not acts of wisdom. But these United States would never have remained united if all the inhabitants had been wise and

conservative folk who never did foolish and reckless things. It was the crazy and reckless young fools like Tabor who poured into Kansas in '55 and '56, with the courage to defy the United States Government and the power of its regular army, who started a conflagration which resulted in the Civil War.

It was this same reckless, pioneer spirit which created California, Oregon, and the other states on the Pacific Coast; that conquered the Indians, built the trans-continental railroads, slaughtered the buffalo, and settled all that vast territory west of the Mississippi.

Tabor had a part in this great adventure. That he was reckless, foolish, idled away much of his youth, squandered a great fortune as if he were an imbecile, fought, gambled, swore, chewed tobacco, drank red liquor, consorted with loose women, divorced an old and quarrelsome wife and married a young and attractive colleen of less than half his age, used his wealth to further his political ambitions, and raised hell generally—all this merely proves that he belonged in his environment, belonged to that period of the West. He was of a later day but he was akin in spirit to those other adventurers who first explored Colorado—the early trappers, the “mountain men.”

The mistake Tabor made was that he lived too long, his life stretching over into a period when the enervating influences of the East had reached as far west as Colorado. In his youth Tabor had often viewed human life over the sights of a Sharps rifle. For two more decades he was to live in a world where the decisions of the six-shooter and the bowie-knife were final; a world in which money was gained to be spent and not to be hoarded for the interest it would yield.

Therefore, when attempting the biography of a man such as Tabor consideration must be given to the world in which he lived. The foolish and reckless things he did, the double dealing which often characterized his political life, his relations with the feminine sex—these were then regarded from a different standpoint than they are today.

There were other phases of human conduct which have not changed, and it is by these Tabor should be judged.

Perhaps the first is honesty. His worst enemy never accused Tabor of gaining a penny wrongfully.

Generosity, kindness, a regard for others not so fortunate—here again his enemies could find no fault.

Nor should courage be overlooked. That Tabor always had the respect and friendship of those who crossed the Plains in '59 is proof that he was not a weakling or a coward.

The purpose of this narrative is to establish the truth about the career of a man who has been too often misrepresented. It will be found that no attempt has been made to gloss over his shortcomings, yet it seems but fair that equal attention be given to his virtues.

The information on which this book is based has been drawn from many sources. I lived in Denver when Tabor was at the height of his career. Later I spent a year in Leadville. Tabor had then been dead only a short time and I listened to many tales, nearly all false, of how he discovered the Little Pittsburg, and how he squandered part of his fortune in that camp.

In 1926, shortly before his death, my father mentioned some of his adventures in the Rocky Mountains in the summer and fall of 1859. Then I learned for the

first time that he had known Tabor so many years ago and was more or less familiar with his life at that period.

From the foregoing, from much gossip, from the perusal of many books and early newspapers, this volume has been compiled. The backbone of several of the chapters is Augusta Tabor's short narrative in Miss Hill's "Colorado Pioneers in Picture and Story." Considerable material has been found in the volumes of the Kansas Historical Collections. The events dealing with John Brown are drawn from Oswald Villard's biography of that famous abolitionist. Fossett's "Colorado," published in 1880 and long since out of print, has been depended on for many facts, as well as all the statistics relating to California Gulch and early Leadville.

In the State Museum at Denver is a large scrap-book of newspaper clippings devoted to Tabor. This was a source of much information. It contains many items about the early life of Elizabeth Tabor.

The files of the early issues of several Colorado newspapers were also consulted. The ancient volumes of the Leadville newspapers yielded many paragraphs about Tabor.

Nearly all the books about Colorado and Kansas in the New York Public Library were consulted. They number too many to be enumerated.

Of all Tabor's contemporaries who were interviewed, the most reliable information was obtained from Henry C. Butler. For years a newspaper reporter in Leadville, and afterward an editor, he was in a position to clear up a number of obscure points.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Elizabeth Tabor, the only person alive today who knows all the facts about Tabor's career after 1880, refused to be interviewed. No one



can blame her. Her misfortunes have been too often exploited by sensational newspapers.

It is too much to hope that this book is free from error. While every statement of fact has been checked with the source from which it was obtained, there is no positive assurance that all the sources are reliable. In his statements to the press, as well as to others, Tabor did not always adhere to the truth, or perhaps his memory was at fault. He had a host of enemies. They had little regard for the truth when criticising him. It has not been an easy task, nor, it is feared, an entirely successful one, to winnow the true from the false.

LEWIS C. GANDY



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## CHAPTER I

### NEW ENGLAND

HORACE AUSTIN WARNER TABOR, the leading character in this narrative, was born near Holland, Vermont, on November 26, 1830. This tiny village is about fifteen miles east of the city of Newport and a short distance from the Canadian border. A few miles south and east of this group of perhaps a dozen buildings, and in a rough and broken country, is a small frame school-house. This structure, one of his nephews said recently, marks the place where Tabor was born.

While millions of words have been written and printed about Tabor, no one, apparently, has ever made a serious effort to draw a truthful picture of his adventurous career. It was not all adventure, certain biographers to the contrary. There were long years of poverty and unremitting toil, yet mixed with these drab periods were moments when Tabor led a life such as one often sees portrayed on the screen. What an expanse of country was covered by the man during his eventful career! The peaceful hills of Vermont; the Missouri River at low water and in flood; the wind-swept prairies of Kansas and Nebraska, untouched by wagon-wheel or plow; the barren sand hills of Eastern Colorado; the deep gulches, high passes, and snow-capped peaks of the Rockies!

And the characters that streamed across this gigantic and colorful stage! Free-soilers, slave-owners, border ruffians, soldiers, Indians, scouts, miners, vigi-

lantes, gamblers, stage robbers, dance-hall girls and worse, actors and actresses, politicians of high and low degree, and several Presidents of the United States!

And a slim little Irish colleen, with golden hair and deep blue eyes, with a round and graceful body, with a sharp wit that never failed to score, with a voice that today is as clear and soft as a lute—it is she who eventually dominates the stage.

1830! It is difficult to believe that the widow of a man born in that year is still alive and apparently in good health. The United States then had a population of about fifteen million. Andrew Jackson was President, the Civil War was more than thirty years away, nearly all the country west of the Mississippi River was an unexplored wilderness, railroads were just coming into existence, the Black Hawk and Mexican wars were yet to be fought, and Abraham Lincoln was laboring as a flatboatman on the lower Mississippi.

Tabor came of good English stock. Rochford Hall, Essex, was the ancestral home of the Tabors, and from there, in early Colonial days, the founders of the American family came to New England. The first emigrants settled on or near the sea coast but later generations moved inland. There is a record of two brothers named Tabor who lived in Washington, N. H., in 1760. One, Church Tabor, had several sons, and it is known that two of these men later moved to Vermont.

Little is known of Horace Tabor's mother, except that she was of English birth and her maiden name, Sarah Ternin.

Tabor's father, Cornelius Dunham Tabor, was born in Topsham, Vermont, a small village near Barre, on July 23, 1799. He lived to a ripe old age, dying in Kansas in 1888.



Cornelius, from all accounts, was a man of some importance in his neighborhood. A few miles from the village of Holland he had a homestead of over a hundred acres, a fraction of which he had cleared of stones and trees at the cost of tremendous labor. From the thin soil of his small fields he raised scanty crops of wheat, corn, barley, rye, buckwheat, and oats. More intelligent and better educated than many of his neighbors, he gained a small extra income by taking charge of the district school during the winter months. The remainder of the year, with the help of his sons, he carried on the work on the farm.

The following brief outline of Tabor's youth, as well as some of the incidents in his later career, is based on an interview with a spry, genial, but very old man who, long ago, had married the daughter of one of Tabor's brothers. Born near Holland, nearly all of his many years have been spent in that vicinity. He was found at a small cottage at Holland Pond, a secluded lake apparently swarming with trout, where he was spending the summer months. He was a successful fisherman, if one could judge by the number of trout he had caught that morning. Tall, lean, erect, active as a boy, his age was not sensed until, with a few words, he painted a vivid picture of an event that happened nearly seventy years before. It was the afternoon of the third day at Gettysburg, and his brief sentences brought to life again the thin gray line of Pickett's men as they came stumbling across the wheat field. The contour of the land, the position of the stone wall, and that of his regiment—such details were clear in his mind. Of events in Vermont from 1850 to 1861, and a farmer's life during that period, his recollections were equally distinct.

And of the happenings in and around Holland, few were the details he had not stored away in his prodigious memory.

The Tabor family dwelt in a small gray clapboard two-story farmhouse of oak and white pine that Cornelius had built with his own hands about the time of his marriage. While in later years he may have spoken of it with pride, and compared its dimensions with those of a palace, the truth is it was a mean little structure of low ceilings and tiny windows, and with a roof that usually leaked in a heavy storm. It was insufferably hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. Innocent of all plumbing and other conveniences, with only a fireplace for heating and cooking, it was a most uncomfortable place in which to live.

The lives of the Tabors, young and old, followed the sun. At daybreak Cornelius and his three boys—Horace, John, Lyman—were at work in the fields, and in and near the house Sarah and her young daughter Emily had an endless round of tasks to perform. During the growing season there was the garden to attend to—planting, hoeing, weeding; and later there was the gathering of the fruits and vegetables, part of which were immediately consumed, and the remainder stored for use during the winter months. The chickens, hogs, cows, and sheep had to be looked after. This meant not only feeding, but eggs had to be collected, the cows milked, and every spring the sheep had to be sheared for the wool that was later spun and woven and dyed and fashioned by hand into garments. Flax, grown on the farm, had to go through many hand processes before it was ready to be woven into cloth. There was laundry work; there was the making of soap and of

candles; the preserving of fruits and vegetables; at hog-killing time in the fall there was the smoking of hams and curing of bacon, the salting of pork, the making of sausages and head-cheese; and always cooking, three heavy meals a day.

While young and old toiled from sun to sun, while their lives were monotonous and lonesome and barren of nearly every luxury, the Vermont farmers and backwoodsmen of a century ago seldom lacked for food. In the Tabor household there were nearly always more butter, milk and eggs than were required. And always the chickens, pigs, sheep, and cattle multiplied. Stored in cellars for use during the winter months were hams and sides of bacon, salt pork, lard, sausage, head cheese, corned beef, apples, potatoes, cabbages, and other vegetables. There were also bins of cornmeal, and rye, wheat, and buckwheat flour. Nor was the livestock neglected. Hay, oats, barley, corn—rations of these were every day dealt out with a liberal hand.

There were other food resources. Holland Pond, a beautiful but secluded lake, as well as the near-by streams, yielded trout and other fish to all who could spare the time to drop a line. Rabbits were plentiful, to be trapped or knocked over with a stone or captured by a dog. Gunpowder was required, however, to secure the partridges that lurked in the woods or the pheasants that hid in the thick underbrush. But a few miles away deer could be shot every fall when the early snows made visible their tracks. In the winter an industrious man or boy could trap enough beaver or other fur to keep himself supplied with tobacco, shot, and gunpowder for the remainder of the year.

Viewing them in retrospect, Horace Tabor in his

later life recalled that his youthful days in Vermont were fairly pleasant, all things considered, but he was never enamoured with the life of a farmer, especially the life on a backwoods farm where there was seemingly no opportunity to get ahead. Particularly did he object to the long hours in the fields—toil that was necessary if the farmer and his family were to escape starvation during the ensuing winter.

The machines and the labor-saving devices that farmers use today were then unknown. A yoke of slow, plodding oxen, dragging a wooden plow with an iron share, turned up the soil as soon as the frost was out of the ground. Guided by Cornelius, or one of the older boys, the oxen, laboring from dawn to dusk, could plow but a small patch of ground every day. The seed grain was sown by hand, always too thick or too thin, and over the seed that escaped the hungry crows was dragged a thin coating of soil. There was then not the deep plowing and deep planting that today is so frequently responsible for heavy crops.

The hand hoe and the rake were depended on to keep down the weeds until the crop was well started toward maturity. Here was back-breaking labor indeed. Hoeing weeds under a blazing sun from sun-up to sun-down, crystallized a determination in young Tabor's mind, as it has in the minds of millions of other boys, to escape from the farm at the first opportunity.

Reaping the ripened grain with a hand cradle was another back-breaking job, as disagreeable as the next task of threshing it on the barn floor with a flail.

There were other equally laborious tasks. A cook-stove was a luxury the Tabors could not afford. All baking was done in an oven beside the fireplace, and

meats were roasted on a spit by the open fire. Always in use, the broad, deep fireplace and the large oven devoured wood by the cord. Fortunately, on the Tabor homestead there was an abundance of timber, but every winter much time had to be given to felling trees, and chopping and hauling cordwood. The next fall all this wood had to be sawed and split and stacked in a dry place. This was a task that required weeks to accomplish, and it came at a time—Indian summer—when a boy fairly ached to tramp the wooded hills with a gun on his shoulder and a dog at his heels.

It is not difficult to visualize young Tabor's boyhood. Scant schooling by his father for a few months in the winter, and then constant toil during the remainder of the year—such was the cost of a bare existence in Vermont a hundred years ago. Pleasures were rare, and the luxuries to be had in large cities, or even the small towns, were hopelessly beyond his reach. The future loomed dark and forbidding. He could see nothing ahead but the endless round of labor that his father had always encountered. Irked by the poverty and monotony of his life, at an early age he became restless and discontented. His discontent was fanned by the newspaper accounts he read of the battles and marches during the war with Mexico. The journey of Kearney's little army from Missouri to Santa Fé; its march from that point, under Doniphan, into Mexico; the stories of Frémont's explorations in the Rocky Mountains—such mental food fed his discontent. He was but sixteen when the Mexican War started, too young to enlist, but in later years he said that the invasion of Mexico was what first fired his ambition to seek a fortune somewhere in that vast region beyond the Missouri River.

A hundred years ago nearly every family was a large one. Ten to twenty children was not unusual. Birth control, the use of contraceptives—such modern ideas were unknown among backwoods women. Strong and healthy, the wives of those days bore a child nearly every year, but only the more robust survived the long hours of heavy toil in the blazing heat of summer, as well as the arduous tasks during the cold Vermont winters. Young Tabor's mother had not the stamina for such a life. It was shortly before the outbreak of the Mexican War that she took to her bed, and a few days later, with her knotted and work-seamed hands folded across her shrunken body, she was laid to rest in Mead Hill Cemetery, located a mile or so west of Holland. The stone that marks her grave says she "died March 1, 1846, aged 49 years & 8 months."

Cornelius did not long remain a widower. Soon the daughter of a neighbor farmer slept in the bed in which Sarah had died. Obviously, all was not now peaceful in the Tabor household. Unhappy as well as discontented, young Tabor was now more determined than ever to escape the drudgery of a Vermont farm. Informed that there was an opportunity to learn the stone-cutter's trade in Quincy, Massachusetts, he was not long in deciding to leave Holland.

While but seventeen, Tabor now had the stature of a man. Tall and heavily muscled, with a quick mind and a certain deftness with his hands, he was soon a master workman—but received only the pay of an apprentice. After two years at Quincy he was as discontented as he had ever been in Vermont. The discovery of gold in California at this time added to his discontent. Like every adventurous boy of that period, Tabor was

anxious to try his luck on the Pacific Coast, but the journey was long and expensive, and he had saved nothing from his meager wages. Reluctantly, he had to forego his dream of winning a quick and easy fortune from the California placers.

The next few years were uneventful. Tabor now commanded a journeyman's wage, and traveled all over New England, to wherever work at his trade could be obtained. When he was twenty-two, unknown to himself, he took what was perhaps the first step toward the golden fortune he was eventually to find. The details of this step are in a story by his first wife, Augusta. She was born in Maine in 1833. Her maiden name was Pierce, and her father was a stone contractor. In 1853 he obtained the contract for the stone work on the state insane asylum to be erected in Augusta, Maine.

Augusta relates that in the spring of that year her father left his home to go to Boston to hire stone-cutters. One of the men he met on the train and employed was young Tabor. Due to his initiative and skill as a workman, it was not long before Tabor was given charge of the crew of stone-cutters.

Tabor was now a handsome youth with a flashing eye and a ready and willing smile. Like his father, hot blood coursed in his veins—of which every girl he met was soon aware, and one of the girls he met was his employer's daughter. Born with all those wiles Mother Eve so frequently bestows on her daughters, Augusta had contrived a meeting with her father's young foreman. Slender, straight, overflowing with vitality, with a quick and nimble tongue, to any man, young or old, she presented a most entrancing picture.

The result was as Augusta had anticipated. So far as

Tabor was concerned, it was a case of love at first sight. More canny in affairs of the heart, Augusta was most reluctant, or pretended to be, hence it was nearly two years before she would consent to an engagement.

It was now the early part of 1855. The asylum contract was finished. It had yielded but small profit. No other work was in immediate prospect. Tabor had saved but a few dollars during his employment by Pierce. Augusta was without means, her father being hard put to provide for his family. Tabor was not a man to ask assistance from a father-in-law. The prospects of the young couple were not encouraging. They discussed the future from every angle. While Augusta was willing, Tabor did not think an early marriage advisable. He did not relish the idea of starting housekeeping with the small amount of money he had saved. He knew what it meant for them both to live on the meager and uncertain wages of a stone-cutter. But they were not downhearted. While their material treasures were limited, they had a wealth of other things much more precious. Youth, health, strength, courage, initiative, faith in each other—these qualities so essential for success they both possessed to a marked degree. The road ahead was longer, more dangerous, and steeper by far than they anticipated. But they approached it with confidence. As always with youth, neither doubted but the journey to the foot of the rainbow would be short and pleasant, and they would quickly find the pot of gold they were seeking and live happy ever after.

And they did find the wealth they sought. But it was not an easy task. Over twenty years was spent in the search. Hardships of which they never dreamed were encountered. Toil of which they never thought they were capable was long their portion. Death, either



by violence or starvation, was often close at hand. And after the stress, the strain, the struggle—the gaining of the goal was a bitter disappointment. Then their happiness vanished. Too late, they found that the joy was in the struggle; with the winning of a fortune came only misery and tragedy.

The year 1855 was a momentous one in these then United States, soon to be disunited, and only to be joined again by a long and bloody war. With the advent of the railroads, the pioneers had swept westward, and already the Mississippi valley seemed uncomfortably crowded. The discovery of gold in California seven years before, and the settlement of Oregon, had caused another empire to spring up on the Pacific Coast. A tremendous immigration from Europe had brought a great increase in the population of the states of the North. The Southern states were also prosperous. It was the golden age of the slavery era. Cotton was indeed a golden crop. Wealth poured in on the planters, who were constantly opening new plantations and increasing their slave gangs. Every effort was made to enlarge the slave population, not always by moral methods, as the large number of mulattoes proved. Nor were other sources of supply overlooked. While the traffic was illegal, the landing of a slave cargo from Africa brought an enormous reward.

The previous year that able, influential, and popular Democratic leader, Stephen A. Douglas, with his eyes fixed on the presidential chair two years hence, had proposed to Congress the now famous, or infamous, Kansas-Nebraska Bill. A great orator, an astute parliamentarian, by clever management he forced the bill through both houses and it was immediately signed by President Pierce. Unwittingly, Douglas had opened a

Pandora box crammed with death and destruction. The sectional hatred that a few years before Henry Clay had seemingly healed, burst out anew. Throughout the North, the bill and its sponsor were bitterly attacked. At Peoria, in his own state, a country lawyer sharply criticised Douglas, and in a speech remarkable for its clearness and logic showed how iniquitous was this new legislation, which repealed the Missouri Compromise that everyone thought, or hoped, had solved the slavery question. This speech of Abraham Lincoln was widely quoted. It was perhaps what first gave young Tabor some conception of the evils of slavery. It was not all he was soon to read, or be told, about the South and its "peculiar institution." Before long he was to see with his own eyes just how firmly entrenched in the South was the idea that a negro was not a human being but a piece of property, like a horse or a mule.

Immediately after the Kansas-Nebraska Bill became a law, the whole country was in a ferment over slavery. Free-soilers and pro-slavery men were hurrying to Kansas to secure possession of that territory. Marvelous tales were being told of the richness of its soil and the healthfulness of its climate. Here, everyone was convinced, was another Garden of Eden. No other section could compare with it. In no other part of the country it was thought could a fortune be so quickly obtained. Railroads were already being built toward the Missouri River. Within five years, at the most, it was believed the iron horse would cross that stream and penetrate this rich and virgin land. After considerable discussion, Horace and Augusta decided that there was but one thing for them to do, and that was to go to Kansas.

Augusta never lacked courage, as her later life was to demonstrate, but she was also prudent when prudence

seemed best. The plan, as they worked it out together, was for Tabor to go to Kansas alone, settle on one of the fertile farms, build a cabin during the summer months, work at his trade whenever he had the opportunity, and the following winter return to Maine for their wedding. Then they would go to Kansas together and start housekeeping in the cabin Tabor had built. It was a sensible plan from every point of view. Augusta dismissed from her mind any doubts as to its success. She was sure of Tabor's love. She was sure that a man with his strength, courage, and intelligence, aided by what help she could give him, would quickly gain a fortune in a country where, it seemed, fortunes could so easily be secured.

All these roseate dreams Tabor also had in mind. In addition, he looked forward to other things. He had for years been a constant reader of the weekly *New York Tribune* and accepted as gospel much that Horace Greeley, its editor, said about political affairs. It is doubtful if any editor ever wielded the power Greeley did for several decades. Greeley was opposed to slavery, and was especially bitter against its extension into the new territory of Kansas. He was not only an idealist—his trenchant pen gave him the power to make idealists of other men. In his editorials Greeley urged young men to emigrate to Kansas, not to gain wealth, but to make it a state in which slavery could not enter.

Tabor was one of many who heeded Greeley's advice. He was eager and willing to accept any wealth he could obtain, but he also intended to do what he could to keep slavery out of Kansas. And he did do his part, not as one of the leaders, but as a trusted lieutenant on whom the leaders could depend.

## CHAPTER II

### SLAVERY

TO UNDERSTAND conditions in Kansas when Tabor arrived there in the spring of 1855, it is necessary to glance back a half century or more.

One of the evils inherited from Colonial days was African slavery—an inheritance that was later to cost the lives of nearly a million young men.

Shortly after the Revolutionary War there was a prospect that slavery would be abolished peacefully. Washington, a slave-owner, would not have hunted and captured a female slave that had run away, leaving to her the choice as to whether or not she would return. Jefferson, another slave-owner, but at heart a true democrat, considered that the welfare of the whole country was much more important than that of any individual or class. No man had a clearer and more logical mind, or could so well forecast future political events. It was with prophetic vision that he penned the following:

“The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. . . . And with what execrations should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the amor patriae of the other. . . . With the morals of a people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. . . . Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.”

Jefferson backed his belief with action. In 1784 he proposed to Congress that all new states added to the original thirteen should be free from slavery after 1800.

In 1787 an Ordinance was passed by Congress pledging the abolishment of slavery in all new territories.

Economic conditions later set at naught these humanitarian plans. These conditions favored the extension of slavery in the South, and soon did away with the evil in the Northern states.

Slave labor was never successful in the North. It was soon found that there was no task a white man could not do quicker and better than a negro slave, and with less supervision. Unlike cotton, there was no crop a Northern farmer could raise that was profitable enough to warrant the employment of slave labor.

Nor was slave labor very profitable in the South previous to about 1810. While a planter might say he owned a number of slaves, the truth was the slaves owned him. He was compelled to support them through good times and bad, and he had to work his bondsmen by a system of overseeing that was most expensive. No threats of future punishment were of avail. Only under the watchful eye of the white overseer, whip in hand, could a task be accomplished. And then the job was never well done. Today one needs only to compare the neat, well-cultivated farms of the Middle West with those of the South to realize the shortcomings of the negro as a farmer.

It was not until the advent of King Cotton that slave labor in the South began to show a good profit.

As early as 1792 a small amount of cotton was being grown in Georgia and South Carolina. Its value as a textile was obvious to everyone, but the removal of the

seeds was an obstacle it seemed impossible to overcome. To do the work by hand was slow, expensive, and unsatisfactory. Many planters had endeavored to solve the problem, but it was not until the Connecticut Yankee, Eli Whitney, invented the cotton gin in 1794 that cotton was of any economic value.

Considering its value to mankind, Whitney's invention ranks with the steam engine and the electric light.

The planters were quick to grasp the value of the Whitney gin—before it was finished and patented the first model was stolen.

The Whitney invention brought about an agricultural revolution in the Southern states. Textiles woven from cotton fibers could now be produced for much less cost than those from wool or flax fibers. There immediately followed a tremendous demand for cotton, and the world was glad to pay for it a price that yielded a handsome profit to the grower.

The planters quickly began to extend their plantations and grow cotton in ever-increasing quantities, but nearly always the demand was greater than they could supply.

With the expansion of the industry there came a demand for more slaves. As has already been pointed out, the increasing number of mulattoes was one method adopted. That white men would sell their offspring from colored women to a life of toil in the cotton fields of the South proved the truth of Jefferson's contention—that slavery degraded the slave-owner more than it did the slave.

Abraham Lincoln, who later was to be the instrument chosen by Providence to crush slavery, knew its evils at first hand. While in his 'teens he made his first

trip down the Mississippi to New Orleans. He and a farmer's son built a flatboat, which they loaded with pork, bacon, flour, and corn, to be exchanged at the end of their journey for cotton, tobacco, and sugar. He marveled at the wonders of the city, but his observing eye also noted such placards on the streets as "One hundred dollars reward for the return of a bright mulatto man slave, named Sam; light sandy hair, blue eyes, ruddy complexion—is so white as to very easily pass as a free white man." Another he recalled said that the undersigned would at all times pay the highest cash price for negroes of all descriptions, and would also attend to their sale on commission, having a jail and yard expressly fitted up for keeping them. "Hunted like stray dogs, auctioned like horses, prisoned like criminals"—what he had been told when a boy, and had read in Northern newspapers, Lincoln now saw with his own eyes.

Two years later, in a larger flatboat of his own construction, Lincoln made another journey to the Southern seaport. This time he remained a month in New Orleans. The ships, the stores, the warehouses, the many races of people—all these interested him. But it is probable that his most vivid impression was what he saw at an auction of slaves. The prospective buyers had gathered in the center of a large hall, around which paraded a number of half-naked negroes, all with heavy iron shackles on their legs. If any moved too fast or too slow, a quick slash from the whip of an attendant admonished him to be on his best behavior. One of those in this pitiful parade was a young mulatto girl, slender, with a graceful figure, flashing white teeth, large and expressive eyes, and having just arrived at

puberty, by every sign was a virgin. Securely chained, but almost naked, she was ordered to step out of the procession and approach close to the buyers where she could be critically examined. At the bidding of the auctioneer, she moved back and forth with strides that would have been long and supple but for the heavy chain that linked her ankles together. The auctioneer extolled her merits to the leering crowd in words that left nothing to the imagination. Judging from the price at which she was eventually sold, they believed his statement that "The gentleman who buys her will get good value for his money!" So passed into the hands of a white man another instrument to produce "prime field hands for the cotton trade."

In what were known as the border states—too far north to grow cotton—slave-owners made haste to sell to the cotton-growers their youngest, strongest, and healthiest slaves; no others would be accepted. Dealing with this phase of slavery, in 1841 Lincoln, who was on a Mississippi voyage, wrote the following to a sister of his friend Speed:

"By the way, a fine example was presented on board the boat for contemplating the effect of condition on human happiness. A gentleman had purchased twelve Negroes in different parts of Kentucky, and was taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together. A small iron clevis was around the left wrist of each, and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter one, at a convenient distance from the others, so that the Negroes were strung together precisely like so many fish upon a trot-line. In this condition, they were being separated forever from the scenes of their childhood, their friends, their fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and many of them from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery, where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless and unrelenting than any



other where; and yet, amid all these distressing circumstances, as we would think them, they were the most cheerful and apparently happy creatures on board. One, whose offense for which he had been sold was an overfondness for his wife, played the fiddle almost continually, and the others danced, cracked jokes, and played various games of cards from day to day. How true it is that 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' or, in other words, that He renders the worst of human conditions tolerable, while He permits the best to be nothing better than tolerable."

Here speaks Lincoln the philosopher, then at an age, and at a time, when it seemed hopeless to attempt to abolish slavery. Later, in 1855, when the outrages in Kansas began to stir the North, when Lincoln began to realize that many others were thinking as he had thought for many years, we hear the voice of action, yet repressed so as not to give offense to an old friend who was an owner of slaves. Writing, not to Speed's sister, but to Speed himself, Lincoln said:

"You know I dislike slavery, and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. . . . I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had together a tedious low-water trip on a steamboat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continued torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power to make me miserable. . . . You say that if Kansas fairly votes herself a free state, as a Christian you will rejoice at it. All decent slave-holders talk that way, and I do not doubt their candor. But they never vote that way. . . . Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it, all men are created equal, except negroes."

There was considerable truth in the contention of the South that much of the opposition in the North to slavery was pure hypocrisy. The cotton planters sought to increase their slave gangs by importations from Africa. This slave trade was illegal, but because of the great financial rewards there were not lacking New England ship-owners and Yankee skippers eager to smuggle in "prime field hands for the Southern trade."

Urged on by the large, quick, and easy profits from growing cotton, the planters increased their slave gangs and overworked and mistreated their slaves until the humanitarians in the North began to protest. Their objections were not heeded. The South was in the political saddle, controlling the Senate as well as the House. In the North, not many people were interested in the condition of the slaves. The negro was not considered to be a human being. He was thought to be on a par with the horse or cow. And the treatment these dumb animals too often receive gives a clue to the conditions under which the negro slave had to live.

The cleavage between the North and South over slavery first became apparent in 1819. There were then eleven free and eleven slave states. The territory of Missouri was seeking admission. The Senate voted to admit Missouri as a slave state, but the House would not agree. Neither side would yield.

At the next session the deadlock was overcome by detaching Maine from Massachusetts, admitting Maine as a free state, and authorizing Missouri to make a pro-slavery constitution. Embodied in the Missouri bill was the famous Missouri Compromise, a sop to the abolitionists of the North. This provided that there

should be no slavery in the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase north of Arkansas.

With twelve free and twelve slave states, thus ensuring an even division of power in the Senate, it was thought that the slavery question was settled for all time.

But there was a group of agitators in the North who would not keep quiet. They flooded the South with printed matter intended to arouse public opinion to the evils of slavery. They "slandered" the slave-owners. They tried to induce slaves to run away or rise in insurrection and slay their masters. These fanatics would stop at nothing to gain their ends—the abolishment of slavery.

Efforts were made to stop the agitation—legal and illegal. In the North anti-slavery meetings were broken up by mobs and offices of abolitionist newspapers were destroyed and their editors killed. An attempt was made to have Congress exclude anti-slavery printed matter from the mails. The bill failed to pass. Anti-slavery petitions were, however, excluded from the House—a rule enforced until 1844.

The abolitionists, or Free Soilers, thrived under persecution and increased in power until in 1848 they brought about the defeat of Lewis Cass, the Democratic nominee for President. They accomplished this by forming the Free Soil party and nominating Van Buren for President. So many New York Democrats voted for Van Buren that the state was lost and the Whigs elected Taylor.

Meanwhile four more states—two slave and two free—had been admitted, and California was seeking admission as a free state.

The South was now in a desperate position. Arrogant with power, lusting for more wealth, believing themselves to be a race superior to the people of the North, who were not above working with their hands, the slave-owners attempted to ride rough-shod over all opposition. It could not be done. Sentiment against slavery was increasing. In wealth and in population the North had forged ahead of the South. It was impossible to deny admission to California. But the admittance of California meant that the North would control the Senate—the House was already in control of the Whigs and Free Soilers. The slave-owners knew that with political control in the hands of the North, abolishment of slavery and ruination of the South was not far away. There was but one alternative: secession, which meant civil war. Both sides recoiled from the test of the sword and turned eagerly to the great compromiser, Henry Clay.

To satisfy the North, Clay proposed that California be admitted as a free state, and that the buying and selling of slaves in the District of Columbia be abolished.

The offer to the South was that two new territories, New Mexico and Utah, be organized, these territories to have the privilege of deciding if they should be free or slave. As an additional favor to the South, there was to be a much more severe law for the capture of fugitive slaves.

After months of debate the various measures were passed and the bills were signed by Fillmore, Taylor having died.

The crisis was over. Clay had performed a tremendous task—a feat that no other man could have accomplished. The whole country drew a long breath. Congress, especially, was glad that the slavery question

would no longer be a bone of contention, interfering with business and threatening to bring on civil war and the disruption of the Union.

Clay's great performance meant nothing to the abolitionists. They never ceased their outcries against the South. They fought the Fugitive Slave Law tooth and nail. They declared that civil war, bloodshed and rapine, and dissolution of the Union, were to be preferred to slavery.

Meanwhile, the Democrats won the 1852 election, and in 1854 Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The fat was in the fire. Once more the entire country was aroused. The South, true to form, threatened secession and civil war unless the bill was passed. The extreme abolitionists howled with glee. They were rapidly increasing in power. A powerful weapon recently placed in their hands was the novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It brought thousands of adherents to their cause. Congress damned Douglas and the colored brother in no uncertain terms. These curses were echoed by nearly everyone, North and South.

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill provided for two new territories, and included the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the adoption of the doctrine of popular sovereignty.

The repeal of the Compromise and the adoption of the sovereignty doctrine meant the opening to slavery of all territories north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , provided the majority of the inhabitants of a territory voted that it be admitted as a slave state.

The introduction of this bill was a great blunder. There was no need of two more territories west of the Missouri River. The country was not crowded. East of

the Missouri was more good unclaimed farming land than there were farmers to occupy it. Furthermore, the land in these territories belonged to the Indians by Government treaty. Twenty or thirty years hence there would have been some excuse for the introduction of this bill.

Douglas claimed that his motive in presenting this bill was to take the slavery question out of politics and transfer it to the territories where it would be a local problem and not be continually threatening to disrupt the Union and bring on civil war. It had exactly the opposite effect.

The Free Soilers fought hard to defeat the bill, but the Whigs and Democrats mustered enough votes to pass it and it was promptly signed by President Pierce.

Trouble was not long in starting. The Free Soilers were resolved that Kansas should be free soil. The South was equally determined that it should be a slave state.

Newspapers throughout the country made every effort to inflame the public mind. Horace Greeley was most eloquent in his denunciations of the bill, and in his organ, the New York *Tribune*, he had a large audience to which to appeal. The newspapers of the South answered in kind. Public meetings were held in many Southern states for the purpose of raising money to send emigrants to Kansas who would vote for slavery. Legislatures in Southern states were asked to appropriate funds for the same purpose.

The temper of the South may be judged from the following extract from a letter written by an Englishman, a relative of Gladstone, the great English premier:

"When in South Carolina, and other Southern states, I witnessed the most extraordinary meetings, presided over by men of influence, at which addresses of almost incredible violence were delivered on the necessity of 'forcing slavery into Kansas,' of 'spreading the beneficent influence of Southern institutions over the new territories,' and of 'driving back at the point of the bayonet the nigger-stealing scum poured down by Northern fanaticism.' "

The anti-slavery people were not idle. Meetings were also held in the Northern states and large sums of money were pledged to help make Kansas a free state. The New England Emigrant Aid Company raised a considerable fund and proposed a great program of emigration.

But the great majority of the early Kansas emigrants were pro-slavery men from Missouri. The new territories were created May 30, 1854. A few days later hundreds of men from Missouri had crossed the river and taken temporary abode in the new territory. By July many other slavery adherents from Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee were on their way to Kansas.

The slavery advocates continued in the majority throughout the territory as late as the summer of 1855. The pro-slavery votes at the March election of that year totaled 5,427, the free-state vote being only 791. It was afterward proven, however, that many of the pro-slavery votes were fraudulent. Hundreds of slavery sympathizers from Missouri entered the Territory, voted unlawfully, and returned to their homes. They were encouraged to do this by the pro-slavery leaders, one of the most prominent being David R. Atchison. He had been Vice-President of the United States and senator from Missouri. Defeated for reelection, he left

the Senate, of which he was president pro tempore, in December, 1854. Returning to Missouri, he immediately devoted all his time and energy to making Kansas a slave state. Previous to the March, 1855, election he had advised the Missouri pro-slavery men to enter Kansas and vote the pro-slavery ticket. Notwithstanding his home was in Platte County, Missouri, he boasted that he had led a company of men into Kansas to vote the pro-slavery ticket.

Two years later Atchison was still an advocate of fraudulent voting. In a speech at Platte City on February 4, 1856, he said: "They (the Kansas free-state men) have held an election on the 15th of last month and they intend to put the machinery of a state in motion on the 4th of March. Now, you are entitled to my advice, and you shall have it. Send your young men, and if they attempt to drive you out, damn them, drive them out. Fifty of you with your shotguns are worth 250 of them with their Sharps rifles. Get ready, arm yourselves, for if they abolitionize Kansas you lose \$1,000,000,000 of your property."

While there was considerable free-state emigration to Kansas during 1855, it did not get fully under way until the next year. The pro-slavery men had the upper hand until the summer of 1856, when the heavy influx of armed free-state men entering the territory through Nebraska, coupled with the bloody blow John Brown struck at Osawatomie, enabled the anti-slavery leaders to gain control. They accomplished this despite the bitter opposition of the Administration at Washington. But this did not end the struggle. It continued until the outbreak of the Civil War, when it was taken up by the entire nation.



The rifle, the revolver, the knife, the rope—by these instruments hundreds of men were slain that Kansas might be free from slavery, and all the ills that followed in its wake. But hundreds of thousands of men had to die, on battlefields, in prisons, and in hospitals, before the whole nation could be free of the curse.

## KANSAS IN 1855

AS DEFINED by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Territory of Kansas included the present state of Kansas, as well as all of Colorado north of the Arkansas River and east of the Rocky Mountains. In the spring of 1855 this vast region had only a few thousand white inhabitants, nearly all of whom were located on or near the eastern border.

There was a taint of slavery all along the northeastern border of Kansas, due to its proximity to Missouri. Because of this taint most of the free-state emigrants settled farther west, their chief stronghold being the village of Lawrence, about thirty miles from the border.

South and east of Lawrence was another settlement, Osawatomie, destined to be an important point in the struggle to make Kansas a free state. Here it was that John Brown struck his first murderous blow at negro slavery. Preceded by five of his sons, Brown arrived in Kansas in the fall of 1855. At the suggestion of one of these sons, he had brought with him a wagon loaded with rifles, ammunition, broadswords, and other munitions of war.

Unlike Brown and his sons, who settled near the Missouri border and close to what was then considered civilization, there were other free-state emigrants who pushed farther west, far beyond any settlement. We will never know why they advanced so deep into what

was then a wilderness. If asked it is doubtful if they could have given a good reason. It could not have been a desire to escape from the border ruffians who were then making it dangerous to live near the Missouri border. On the extreme frontier the Indians were just as great a peril. It may have been merely a dislike for what they thought was too crowded a country, that the game was more plentiful, that the soil seemed more rich, that the climate was more pleasant—any of a score of other reasons. But if the truth were known, it was a love of danger and adventure, a desire for complete freedom of action; in short, an outcropping of the gypsy spirit latent in nearly every young and healthy man.

One free-state emigrant who evidently wished to be free of the fetters of civilization was Josiah H. Pillsbury. A native of New Hampshire, he was one of the members of the third party of emigrants sent to Kansas by the New England Emigrant Aid Company, arriving there in the summer of 1854. For some reason he did not immediately preëempt any land but spent the summer and fall of that year looking over the country. Evidently not satisfied with any of the unclaimed land around Lawrence, where he had lived during the winter, early the next spring he traveled west to Fort Riley, many miles beyond any settlement.

On Deep Creek, in what is now Riley County, near the present town of Zeandale, Pillsbury at last found a location which suited him. After preëempting a claim, early in April, 1855, he returned to Kansas City to meet a party of emigrants from New England. In this party were his brother, L. H. Pillsbury, William and Andrew Marshall, Abraham Stone, J. C. Mossman,

F. A. Abbott, and H. A. W. Tabor. These men had traveled by train from New England to St. Louis, then the end of the railroad, and from there by steamboat to Kansas City.

Among other free-state emigrants the Pillsbury party encountered at Kansas City were three sons of John Brown—Owen, Frederick, Salmon—who had come by team from Ohio. No record can be found as to how they met. At that time free-state men were in a minority in Kansas and for self-protection often traveled in groups. Doubtless it was at some gathering at or near Kansas City that Tabor and the Brown brothers first met. Tabor, and the other men in his party, were not backward in giving their reasons for coming to Kansas; nor did the Browns leave anyone in doubt as to their opinions about slavery.

Several men of the Pillsbury party were married and had brought along their wives. These women, with their children, were left behind at Kansas City and Lawrence, while the men set out on foot for Deep Creek, about a hundred miles distant. They had several yokes of oxen but only one wagon. The wagon was heavily loaded with their supplies—axes, shovels, plows, bedding, food, tents and, most important, ammunition for their "Beecher Bibles."

A "Beecher Bible," it should here be explained, was the popular nickname for a Sharps rifle, invented and then manufactured by Christian Sharps. It was given its expressive title because of an impassioned speech made at Hartford in 1854 by the famous divine, Henry Ward Beecher, in which he said, "Give each man a Bible in one hand and a Sharps rifle in the other and send him to Kansas." The Sharps could be fired much

faster than a muzzle-loader, and was more accurate, had a longer range, and shot a heavier bullet than the ordinary rifles then in general use. The border ruffians were usually armed with cap-and-ball revolvers, shotguns, bowie-knives, and squirrel rifles, excellent weapons for close work, but not a match for the Sharps in open fighting. The Sharps had an important part in making Kansas a free state. It is not surprising that when the border ruffians found that the free-state men were being armed with these superior guns they began to doubt the success of their cause.

Tabor, and the other men in the Pillsbury party, had plenty of time to view the country as they trudged over the prairies to Deep Creek, their progress not being over ten miles a day. Never had they seen a more pleasant land or one that appeared to have a better future. Spring was now well advanced and the warm rains gave promise of abundant crops. They saw much game, noted the luxuriant growth of grass in the low meadows, and the heavy timber on the many streams. "Here," they agreed, "is a land where life will be worth living, and therefore a land worth fighting for."

Arriving at Deep Creek, they all joined together and soon built a substantial cabin for Josiah Pillsbury. This was located near a small natural fall of the stream, and is today known as Pillsbury's Crossing.

Meanwhile, each man had found time to select his 160 acres of land, after which they again joined and built a cabin on every claim, cutting the black walnut logs from the wealth of timber that grew on either side of Deep Creek. Other emigrants arrived during the spring and summer, and by fall all the best land along

the stream had been preëmpted. Thus was founded the Zeandale colony.

Tabor, and the other emigrants who arrived early enough, planted crops of corn and had an excellent yield. Tabor had counted on his corn crop to give him enough money to return to Maine and marry Augusta. There was no market for corn in Kansas that year because no one had any money, nor could Tabor secure work at his trade. Obviously, there were no wedding bells for Augusta. Tabor was too young to be much discouraged. Nevertheless, he had to face the fact that he was marooned in Kansas for some time to come.

The previous winter had been very mild and, assuming that such was the character of all Kansas winters, the emigrants made little or no effort to build their cabins proof against the cold. In January they were severely punished, the thermometer dropping to thirty below zero.

There was not much food. F. A. Abbott said that one bitter morning in January Tabor called at his cabin to thaw out. He was walking home from a neighbor's and had a coffee-mill under his arm. Asked if he had not starved during the severe weather just passed, he laughed and said: "You need not worry about me starving when I have plenty of corn and a coffee-mill to grind it in."

This remark gives a clew to Tabor's character. A man who could live alone all winter in a one-room log cabin with only ground corn to eat, and then laugh about it, would not be dismayed at misfortunes over which others would lament.

Tabor, with plenty of idle time on his hands, had kept in close touch with the political situation in Kansas

ever since his arrival. As were nearly all his neighbors, he was outspoken in declaring that the slave element must be driven out or there would never be peace and safety. He backed up his words with actions. When early in December word reached Zeandale that the pro-slavery men were gathering to attack Lawrence, Tabor shouldered his rifle, and with a heavy load of ammunition, set out on foot to join the defenders. It was a long, weary march of over a hundred miles, but within three days he took his place in the rifle-pits that had been dug to defend the town.

The threat to sack and burn the village of Lawrence was the culmination of a series of murderous conflicts, personal and political, that had taken place during the previous spring and summer. These had their genesis in the fraudulent Legislature which came into being as a result of the election of March 30th.

The territorial governor, Andrew H. Reeder, was asked by the free-state leaders to set aside this election. He did issue a call for a new election in six districts, all the districts being won by the free-state adherents. This move accomplished nothing. When the Legislature convened it ousted the six free-state members and seated the pro-slavery men the governor ousted. Reeder later declared that the Legislature was no longer a legal body. It retaliated by petitioning President Pierce that Reeder be removed. Pierce had, however, already dismissed Reeder from office, his place being taken by Secretary Woodson, a radical pro-slavery man, who acted as governor pro tem.

Free, now, from any interference, this Legislature proceeded to enact the infamous slavery laws. These laws illustrate the lengths to which fanaticism will go if

not controlled by common sense. They provided the death penalty for enticing away slaves or inciting them to riot. Anti-slavery men could not serve on a jury. Free-state men were taxed, but were prohibited from holding any political office. They were also disenfranchised by being required to take an oath at the polls to sustain certain barbarous fugitive-slave laws.

The acts of this Legislature were supported by the Administration at Washington, headed by President Pierce and the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis. Their tools were the Kansas Chief Justice, Lecompte; and the United States District Attorney, Isacks.

The officers of the regular army, stationed at Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley, were nearly all slavery sympathisers and would make no effort to support the free-state cause or help the free-state men in any way.

Free-state emigrants who arrived in Kansas in 1855 were virtually outlaws so far as legal protection was concerned. Those who settled near the Missouri border were frequently murdered, assaulted, robbed, or ordered to leave the territory. Only at Lawrence and its vicinity or far out on the frontier, was there any degree of safety for a man opposed to slavery.

Notwithstanding these discouraging conditions, the free-state leaders did not lose hope. Their cause had strong friends in New England. Practical friends. Eli Thayer shipped to Kansas a hundred Sharps rifles, forwarded in boxes marked "Books." As evidence of their support of the free-state cause, Horace Greeley and several of his friends sent a mountain howitzer. What was more important, however, was that free-state emigrants—young, able-bodied, well-armed men like Tabor—continued to arrive in increasing numbers.



To gain some degree of legal protection, and to determine what action to take against the bogus Legislature and its slavery laws, the free-state men held several conventions. One at Lawrence in June is best remembered by the defiant resolution, "that in reply to the threats of war so frequently made by our neighbor state (Missouri) our answer is, We Are Ready."

The increase in the number of their followers gave courage to the free-state leaders. One of the more prominent, Dr. Robinson, in a speech on July 4th threw down the gauntlet to the slavery adherents when he said that if slavery in Missouri was not possible with Kansas a free state, then slavery in Missouri must go by the board.

In several conventions held that summer the free-state men ironed out their factional differences, formed the Free State Party, and at Topeka on October 23d adopted a state constitution and organized a state government. A proclamation was also issued for an election on January 15th of the coming year, to vote for a list of state officers, as well as senators and representatives.

Meanwhile, the assaults and murders of free-state men continued. These culminated in the killing of Charles Dow by F. N. Coleman, an unusually atrocious murder, the unarmed victim being shot from behind. After attending a meeting to protest against the murder and to demand that the murderer be brought to justice, Dow's friend, Jacob Bronson, was arrested by the pro-slavery sheriff, Samuel J. Jones. The charges were making threats and breaches of the peace. That night Jones and his posse of fifteen men were met with an equal number of free-state men. With their levelled

Sharps rifles, the free-state men demanded the release of Bronson. Realizing that his life was the penalty of a refusal, Jones surrendered his prisoner.

Sheriff Jones, when reporting the affair to Governor Shannon, said he had been met by a party of forty men armed with Sharps rifles, and modestly asked for a force of three thousand militia to put down the insurrection. Shannon complied promptly with the request, and Kansas pro-slavery men, as well as many more from Missouri, began to gather along the Wakarusa River. Ostensibly, their purpose was to arrest Bronson and all who took part in his rescue; their real object was to sack and burn the town of Lawrence and kill or drive out of Kansas all the free-state settlers.

The people of Lawrence prepared to defend the town. Rifle-pits were dug, the citizens were organized and armed, and a call was sent out to all free-state men in Kansas to come to the rescue. Tabor was one of many who responded to this call. History also records that John Brown, in command of the "Liberty Guards," of twenty-one men, including four of his sons, joined the defenders on December 7th. Here it was that Tabor first met the elder Brown, and he was one of those who volunteered to follow Brown when he suggested a night attack on the pro-slavery camp. Other councils prevailed and the attack was not made.

Governor Shannon was now much disturbed at the turn affairs had taken. The fortifying of Lawrence and the resolute attitude of the free-state men brought realization that both factions were eager for bloodshed. He appealed to the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, for United States troops to stop the impending battle. Davis refused, evidently desiring a fight and the destruc-

tion of Lawrence. This was also what the mob camped on the Wakarusa desired. The defenders of Lawrence offered a "Missouri Compromise" of their own devising. They would retain their Sharps rifles, surrendering the contents of the rifles on demand, each content to be propelled by a heavy charge of black powder.

Eventually a compromise was arrived at—a shameful one, according to John Brown and many others. It was agreed that the men of Lawrence would help Sheriff Jones serve any legal writs in that vicinity, and that Governor Shannon would use what influence he possessed to see that compensation was given for any depredations committed by the invaders.

When Tabor returned to Deep Creek he received the congratulations of all his neighbors. He had borne himself well at Lawrence, and had shown that he possessed courage, intelligence, and initiative. He also had the reputation of being a genial and friendly young man who was always ready to lend a hand to a neighbor when some heavy task was to be done. Therefore, no one was surprised when the Zeandale colony decided that young Tabor should be their representative in the First Kansas Free State Legislature. It was quite an honor for a young man who had just passed his twenty-fifth birthday and whose worldly possessions were the claim he had preëmpted, the cabin he and his neighbors had built, the ragged clothes he wore, and a clean, well-oiled Sharps rifle.

The tame ending of the "Wakarusa War," and the failure to capture, sack, and burn Lawrence, "the hot-bed of Kansas abolitionism," was discouraging to the pro-slavery faction, as well as the Washington Administration. The latter had viewed with much distrust

the various free-state conventions, and was more or less alarmed over the approaching election, sponsored by the Free State Party, which was to be held on January 15th. This election, from the Administration point of view, was very close to treason. Was there not already in existence a full-fledged territorial government, legal in every way, with a constitution, laws, officers, and everything? True, it was controlled by the pro-slavery faction, and there were rumors that the election which created it was not entirely honest, there being some fraudulent votes cast. But what of it? Slavery was a divinely inspired institution, and if the free-state fanatics did not want to live in a slave territory they were at liberty to go elsewhere. Heretofore slave and free states had been admitted in pairs. Kansas should be no exception. Let the free-state men have Nebraska, but Kansas belonged to the South, and was going to be a slave state, as it was now a slave territory.

A weak, irresolute man, President Pierce was more or less under the influence of Jefferson Davis, by all odds the strongest man in his cabinet. Governor Shannon, who was now in Washington, added what influence he possessed, and also gave Pierce a garbled account of affairs in Kansas. As a result, Pierce now sent to Congress a special message in which he proclaimed the legality of the pro-slavery Legislature, and denounced the acts of the free-state men as "treasonable insurrection" if they resisted by force any laws passed by the bogus Legislature or the authority of the general government. In a proclamation issued a few days later he warned them that any overt act meant that they would feel the full force of the Federal Government, which had the regular army at its command to back up

its decrees. This attitude of the Washington Administration caused the *Squatter Sovereign*, a pro-slavery newspaper published in Atchison, Kans., to remark: "In our opinion the only effectual way to correct the evils that now exist is to hang up to the nearest tree the very last traitor who was instrumental in getting up, or participating in, the celebrated Topeka Convention."

But the free-state men and their leaders were well advised. They were careful to commit no action that would lay them open to the charge of treason. As a result, Shannon, Davis, the Washington Administration, and all the pro-slavery faction, could only fret and fume.

Much as the Administration would have liked to crush the Kansas "traitors" with the bayonet, it feared to take such radical action, well knowing it would bring on civil war. Shannon knew, better than did his superiors at Washington, how fraudulent was the March, 1855 election; how greatly the free-state settlers outnumbered the pro-slavery emigrants; and how determined the free-state men were to resist the laws passed by the bogus Legislature. The Administration knew, from the success of the newly born Republican Party in the 1855 elections, that the North would not permit the free-state settlers to be driven from their homes.

Meanwhile, the arrival of winter, one of the most severe ever known in Kansas, had brought the struggle to a temporary halt. There were no railroads in the Territory, and the deep snows and sub-zero weather made dangerous or impossible any traveling. River transportation on the Missouri was also at a standstill, that turbid stream being imprisoned in an icy grasp.

Huddled by open fireplaces in their log cabins, or in dugouts along the banks of the streams, usually

with only ground corn for food, the free-state settlers awaited with fortitude the coming of spring. They knew that the present calm was but the lull before the storm, and that with the advent of warm weather the border ruffians would again be burning homes, stealing horses and cattle, and assaulting and murdering all who opposed them.

The free-state men were not as yet aware of it, but at Osawatomie there was a gaunt old man who was quite capable of beating the border ruffians at their own game. He was as blood-thirsty and as cruel as any man they could muster. To slay, in cold blood, an armed or unarmed pro-slavery man was, in his estimation, a commendable act. To burn the home, to appropriate the livestock and the slaves of a Missouri slave-owner, to kill the owner if he voiced the slightest objection, was a duty John Brown thought he owed to humanity.

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## THE WARFARE IN 1856

AS PLANNED, the election of a Free Soil Legislature and a full list of State officers under the Constitution adopted at Topeka took place on January 15th. Tabor, with D. Toothman and Henry Todd, was elected to represent what was then known as the Fifth District.

The pro-slavery men made no attempt to interfere with the election except at their stronghold, Leavenworth. Here the mayor forbade its taking place. It was held two days later at Easton, a village twelve miles away. Since there were many pro-slavery men in the vicinity, the polls were strongly guarded. Nevertheless, an attack was made, and in the fight which ensued a slavery adherent was killed and two of his companions were wounded. Two free-state men were also wounded. The battle took place at night, and while much powder was burned, evidently it was just an ordinary little frontier fight at a range which did not permit much execution with the kind of firearms then in use.

The next day Reese P. Brown, who had been elected a member of the Free Soil Legislature the day before, with several other free-state men, was returning to Leavenworth. He was one of those who had guarded the polls at Easton. They were all captured by a crowd of pro-slavery men, aided by the Kickapoo Rangers, a border ruffian organization. At a summary "trial" by this drunken mob, Brown was so badly wounded with a hatchet that he soon died. The Kansas pro-slavery newspapers approved the killing of Brown. Before he

was slain the Kansas *Pioneer* of Kickapoo had suggested a course of action against all free-state men in the following words: "Sound the bugle of war over the length and breadth of the land and leave not an Abolitionist in the Territory to relate their treacherous and contaminating deeds. Strike your piercing rifle balls and your glittering steel to their black and poisonous hearts!" Needless to say, the Kansas free-state newspapers were equally bitter. Phillips, the Kansas correspondent for the New York *Tribune*, in his dispatches to that newspaper made every effort to inflame public opinion against the pro-slavery faction. In his editorials in the *Tribune*, which then had a national circulation, Horace Greeley seconded the work of his reporter.

With such an ominous opening of the political year, both factions could look forward to a season of battle. They were not disappointed. Murder followed murder, until it would seem the blood-letting would never cease.

And what a foolish struggle it was! To clear their farms, to build homes, schools, churches, towns, bridges, roads in this wilderness—these required all the energies strong pioneers could muster. Instead of such useful work, all along the eastern border of Kansas men were busy killing one another and destroying the few improvements that had been made. The bloody work was to continue until the whole country was involved. Looking back at it now, how much wiser and more economical it would have been to have floated a bond issue and purchased, at any cost, the freedom of every slave.

Early in March, Tabor and the other elected members of the Free Soil Legislature began to gather at Topeka for the initial session, which convened on the



fourth of that month. They must have assembled with some trepidation, because in his proclamation of February 11th President Pierce had warned all persons "engaged in unlawful combinations against the constituted authority of the Territory of Kansas, or of the United States," to disperse at once to their abodes, and the United States troops were pledged to carry out this order.

Despite this threat the Legislature convened on the appointed day and remained in session until March 15th, when it adjourned until July 4th. According to the journal of the House, a voluminous document, Tabor took an active part in the proceedings, being present at all the roll-calls and voting on every measure proposed. Among other acts of this Legislature was the preparation and submitting to Congress of a memorial asking for the admission of Kansas as a free state under the Constitution adopted at Topeka. The free-state leader, Jim Lane, and ex-Governor Reeder, were elected United States senators, to serve if Kansas were admitted to the Union.

Winter now began to release its grip and with the warmer weather came riding from Missouri numerous groups of border ruffians who resumed burning the cabins of isolated settlers and stealing their livestock. Early in May they were reinforced by the Jefferson Buford party, about four hundred well-armed men from Alabama and vicinity. For the next few months the eastern border of Kansas was a dangerous place for any man who did not profess to be in sympathy with the idea of Kansas being a slave state.

Sheriff Jones, the irrepressible trouble-maker, now appeared in Lawrence to serve the old warrants on the

rescuers of Bronson. He arrested one man but the victim was soon released by his friends. Jones appealed for help, after having a second time attempted to serve his warrants. With the aid of a lieutenant and ten troopers of the First cavalry, he arrested six men on the charge of contempt of court because they had declined to aid him in serving his warrants. That night, while sitting in his tent, he was shot and badly wounded by a man named Filer. The people of Lawrence denounced the crime and offered a reward for the arrest of whoever did the shooting. Not until forty-two years later was it known that Filer attempted the assassination.

The pro-slavery faction declared that Jones' wound must be avenged and the Federal judge, Lecompte, started the legal machinery. At his behest a grand jury indicted for treason seven of the free-state leaders and also recommended that the two newspapers at Lawrence, as well as the hotel in that town, be abated as nuisances.

With a posse of over seven hundred men, nearly all of whom came from Missouri, on May 21st Sheriff Jones demanded and received the surrender of Lawrence. He compelled the citizens to give up their Greeley cannon and all the rifles and other arms which had not been hidden or taken out of the town. The two newspaper offices were then destroyed. With the cannon just surrendered, and with fire and gunpowder, the stone hotel was next reduced to a ruin. After considerable pillage, the posse withdrew at dusk, one of their last acts being the plundering and burning of the home of Charles Robinson, who had been elected Governor at the January free-state election.

Great was the glee of the pro-slavery men over the easy capture of Lawrence. Atchison, a prominent

leader, was especially joyful, declaring it was the happiest day of his life. This sentiment was echoed by Sheriff Jones, whose wound had not yet healed.

There was much gloom among the free-state men. John Brown was almost speechless with wrath. The moment he learned of the threatened attack he started for Lawrence but the news reached him too late. This was also true of Tabor, who did not learn of the affair until after the surrender.

Brown now resolved to strike back at the pro-slavery faction. On the night of May 24th, with four of his sons and three other men, he massacred five pro-slavery men living near his home on Pottawatomie Creek. All were brutal, bloody murders, the victims being slain with several of the broadswords Brown had obtained at Akron the previous year.

Brown and his men were now compelled to go into hiding to escape the pro-slavery posses sent to capture them. Brown did not long remain in hiding. After a number of radical free-state men had joined his command, he sallied forth and gave battle to one of the posses. After a severe contest at Black Jack he captured about thirty of a posse of eighty men, the remainder having escaped during the fight. United States troops later compelled Brown to surrender his prisoners.

The time was now approaching for the meeting of the Free State Legislature at Topeka on July 4th. It had been planned to have at Topeka at that time such a large number of armed men that Colonel Sumner, with all the United States troops he could muster, would not dare to interfere. The plans miscarried. When the day arrived Jim Lane and several hundred men who had

been recruited in the East were still in Iowa with a month of travel before them.

Sumner was confronted with only a small number of armed but untrained and unorganized free-state militia, and without a strong leader. Tabor and the other members of the Legislature were armed not only with rifles but with a letter signed by Governor Robinson and other leaders advising them that resistance to any Federal interference was justifiable.

Here was all the fuel needed for a civil-war bonfire, the only lack being a strong leader. No one knew better than Sumner how dangerous was the situation. While he was opposed to slavery, he had orders from Governor Shannon to prevent the convening of the Legislature. Therefore, he took no chances but gathered what seemed to be a large force for his purpose.

Sumner arrived at Topeka, then a small frontier village, the day before the Legislature was to assemble. He brought with him five companies of dragoons, two pieces of artillery, and an ample supply train. Camp was made close to the legislative hall. The next morning, the moment he was informed the members of the Legislature had entered the hall, with his dragoons he charged across the prairie and surrounded the hall. With the loaded cannon guarding the street in both directions, and with the dragoons in a double line around the hall, Sumner entered the building and mounting the speaker's platform ordered the Legislature to disperse. Asked if this dispersal was to be at the point of the bayonet, Sumner replied, "I shall use the whole force under my command to carry out my orders."

Thus was ended for a time, most effectively but not ingloriously, young Tabor's career as a law maker.

Tabor, as well as all the leading free-state men, was now much discouraged—and the pro-slavery men were correspondingly elated. After all the big talk, and the high hopes which had been raised, it was disappointing to find that no attempt was to be made to resist Sumner. If there had been some brave and intelligent leadership it would have been possible to have had so many armed men at Topeka on that critical day that Sumner would not have dared to disperse the Legislature. But regardless of the outcome, Sumner could not avoid being the scapegoat. Because of the outcry throughout the North over Sumner's action, Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War, found it necessary to say that Sumner had exceeded his instructions and to disavow the dispersal of the Legislature.

Young Tabor was too optimistic to lament for long the sudden and decisive end of his career as a statesman. He returned to his cabin on Deep Creek for a few days, explained to his neighbors what had happened at Topeka and how useless it was to resist the United States army and, after asking them to keep an eye on his cabin, he borrowed as much ammunition as his friends could spare and, shouldering his rifle, set out on foot for Lawrence. There he was now recognized as a man of courage and good judgment and was soon in the confidence of the more radical free-state leaders. An accurate shot with a Sharps rifle, possessed of great endurance, he took an active part that summer in the numerous forays against the border ruffian gangs who were then besieging the town and laying waste the surrounding territory.

The first of these attacks was on August 5th, when a raid was made on the pro-slavery settlement of New

Georgia, on the Marais des Cygnes River. It was a bloodless battle, the sixty or seventy-five people fleeing as the Lawrence column approached. After burning the blockhouse and commandeering what provisions had been left behind, the column returned to Lawrence, to be loudly cheered by the citizens. The provisions were more than welcome, since the pro-slavery gangs had cut off all shipments of food and other supplies and the inhabitants were close to starvation.

The pro-slavery leaders wrongly credited John Brown with being the leader of the attack on New Georgia; indeed, they attributed to him the leadership of all the other raids which now followed in quick succession. As one of his sons wrote to his sister, "Old Capt. Brown can now be raised from every prairie and thicket."

At Franklin, four miles to the southeast of Lawrence, was a pro-slavery blockhouse defended with the Greeley howitzer captured by the Jones posse the previous May. On the night of August 12th a number of men from Lawrence, Tabor being in the party, sallied forth and made a determined attack on this stronghold. The blockhouse garrison, while surprised, made a determined resistance, killing one free-state man and wounding six others. The fortress was captured by the device of backing up to it a wagon loaded with burning hay. Four of the defenders were wounded, one soon dying of his injury. Several prisoners, the brass six-pounder, and other arms and considerable ammunition were among the spoils taken back to Lawrence in triumph. The provisions were, however, the most valuable part of the loot.

To the southwest of Lawrence was another block-house, Fort Saunders. This was a two-story log building with portholes above and below, and surrounded with strong earthworks. Under the command of Jim Lane, Tabor and about four hundred other men attacked the fort and its garrison of eighty Georgians. This was on August 15th. Like at New Georgia, it was a bloodless battle, the pro-slavery men retreating after a long-range fusillade. Much rich plunder was left behind. The loot captured included a number of new Springfield rifles, powder, lead, horses, wagons, flour, bacon, sugar, coffee—supplies badly needed by the free-state men.

It is probable that at this time Tabor did not possess a dollar he could call his own. Soldiering was now his only occupation, and he was in an army which served without pay. With his comrades, all equally destitute of money, the loot captured in these raids was their only reward. It is not surprising that they were so eager to strip the pro-slavery men of every possession, and to burn or destroy anything that was useless or which they could not carry away. The struggle had now become a freebooting warfare, both factions discarding all the rules of war and fighting like brigands.

The next raid, the capture of Fort Titus, showed how little regard the free-state men now had for the rights or the property of pro-slavery men.

Colonel H. T. Titus was one of the most active and intelligent of the pro-slavery leaders. He came from Florida and had gained considerable military experience as a Cuban filibuster. According to Colonel S. W. Eldridge, whose stone hotel at Lawrence this leader helped to destroy, Titus had a band of two or three

hundred men who were always available for use as a posse or as militia whenever the pro-slavery faction required them. While not thus engaged, they were busy making night raids on free-state settlers, "commandeering" horses, cattle, or anything of value. They were thought to have been guilty of many of the mysterious murders of free-state settlers around Lawrence. Therefore, Tabor and the other members of the free-state militia welcomed the suggestion that an attack be made on the Titus stronghold. Only three miles away was a detachment of United States troops guarding the free-state men who had been arrested for treason under indictments returned by the Lecompte grand jury. An intimation from the friendly commander of the detachment that he would not interfere without orders, and if the attack were made quickly orders would not be received in time, together with a confidential tip that not over forty men were in the blockhouse and vicinity, determined Walker, the free-state leader, to make an early-morning surprise attack.

The assault was launched at daybreak but the defenders were ready and the first charge was repulsed. Of the eleven men who charged the blockhouse, nine were wounded and the leader, Captain Shombre, was killed. Eighteen of the remaining forty men, including Captain Walker, were soon wounded. Reinforcements from Lawrence hurried forward, bringing with them the brass Greeley howitzer. There was no iron shot for the cannon, but Thomas Bickerton, an ingenious man, had contrived a mould from which he cast shot made from type salvaged from one of the destroyed Lawrence newspapers. "This is the second edition of the *Herald of Freedom*," Bickerton remarked as he opened fire.



The soft lead balls made little or no impression on the stout walls of the blockhouse. After much precious gunpowder had been wasted and no flag of truce appeared, it was decided to try the device of a wagon loaded with hay, which had been so successful at Franklin. Protected by the hay, and aided by a concentrated rifle fire directed toward the side of the blockhouse they were approaching, a few courageous men quickly backed the wagon against the structure, despite the bullets whistling about their feet.

The logs of the blockhouse were dry, the wind was blowing from the right direction to ignite the structure. The garrison had its choice of being roasted alive or surrendering. Before the match was applied to the hay the white flag appeared.

Titus and six of his followers were severely wounded. It was charged that one man, whose body was found before the blockhouse was burned to the ground, was slain after the surrender. When Walker returned to Lawrence with his loot and his prisoners he had great difficulty in saving Titus from being hanged. John Brown urged strongly that Titus be lynched as an example to other border ruffian leaders.

Fort Titus was crammed with plunder. In addition to thirteen horses, four hundred guns, many bowie-knives and pistols, and much ammunition were captured. During the looting of the blockhouse one of the attackers found a satchel containing fifteen thousand dollars belonging to Titus. He "commandeered" it for his own use. The free-state men made a clean sweep of all the belongings of Titus and his followers, burning everything they did not want and could not carry away.

With the capture of Fort Titus, Tabor's services as

a free-state soldier came to an end. Its capture also marked the beginning of the end of organized effort to make Kansas a slave state, there being but one more attempt to capture Lawrence.

Governor Shannon now essayed the rôle of peace-maker. At Lawrence he patched up an agreement which suited nobody. Titus and the other prisoners were released. In return, Shannon agreed to release five free-state men held prisoners at Lecompton for participating in the attack on Franklin. Shannon then resigned his office, which was taken over by Secretary Woodson until the arrival of the new Governor, John W. Geary.

Aided by Atchison and other slavery leaders, Woodson started to gather a large force to carry on the war. Nearly three thousand men, with four pieces of artillery, assembled at Leavenworth and soon were on their way to capture Lawrence. They camped on the Wakarusa, about four miles from the town, while they organized for the assault.

Previously, a party of these men had burned the town of Osawatimie and laid waste the country around it, despite the brave fight made by John Brown and a few of his followers. Brown's son Frederick was murdered before the battle started. Thus the pro-slavery men scored one bloody mark against Brown for the massacre at Osawatimie the previous May.

Governor Geary now arrived and immediately started to put an end to the warfare. His first step was to dispatch a force of United States troops to Lawrence with orders to protect the town and compel the Atchison army to withdraw. The invaders yielded to the dragoons and the battery of artillery and returned to Missouri.

Now that Lawrence was safe from attack, and there were no more pro-slavery settlements in that vicinity

to give trouble or yield loot, the freebooting free-state militia disbanded. Tabor was perplexed as to what to do. All the past spring and summer he had been busy with political affairs and fighting border ruffians. As a consequence there was no crop of corn at Deep Creek awaiting him to harvest. Nor did he fancy spending another winter alone in his cheerless cabin and depending on the charity of neighbors for food. Moreover, he was very much in love with Augusta, with whom he was in constant correspondence, and was anxious to be married. He had no money to return to Maine for that purpose, and he knew it was not fair to ask her to make the long and dangerous trip to Kansas alone to marry a man without a dollar in his pocket. The outlook seemed hopeless, but Providence, or what was later known as "Tabor luck," intervened.

Fort Riley, located near the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers, and only twenty miles from Tabor's homestead at Zeandale, was established as an infantry post in 1853. The Congress that adjourned in March of the following year made an appropriation to prepare it for a cavalry post. The construction of the new buildings, which were of stone from quarries in the vicinity, was brought to a halt by an outbreak of cholera. Over a hundred men sickened and died within five days. As a result, little was accomplished in 1855, and the work proceeded slowly the following year. In the fall of '56 there was still much to be done and Tabor had no difficulty in securing employment as a stone-cutter. With his marriage as a goal, he worked steadily and saved a large part of his wages. By the end of the year he had accumulated a considerable sum—enough to go to Maine and marry Augusta and return to Kansas.

## CHAPTER V

### RILEY COUNTY

BUILDING operations at Fort Riley ceased about Christmas. Tabor returned to his lonely little cabin on Deep Creek, where he remained until January, when he went to Topeka to attend another session of the Free State Legislature. As no quorum was present at the opening session, an adjournment was taken to the next day, January 7th. With a quorum in attendance, the most important business transacted was the appointment of a committee of three, one member of which was Tabor, "to prepare and report at an early day a memorial to Congress asking for the admission of Kansas as a State under her constitution."

The Federal authorities had always regarded this Legislature as not only illegal but treasonable. There were no United States troops present to disperse it, as there was the previous July. Some action had to be taken, however, so when the Legislature adjourned for the day a deputy United States marshal arrested for treason a dozen of the members, including the speakers of both houses. They were taken to Tecumseh but were soon released on bail.

Obviously, no quorum was present the next day, so the two houses met in joint session to receive the memorial prepared by Messrs. Tabor, Dickey, and Blood. This petition is a rather pathetic document, much too long to be quoted here. It recites the wrongs of the free-state settlers, declares the members of the Legislature

are not disloyal, and asks for "the protection of your Honorable body, whose province and whose constitutional duty it is to afford it." After the memorial was read and endorsed and ordered transmitted to Congress, both houses adjourned until June 9th.

We shall never know to what extent Tabor participated in the drafting of this memorial. It is probable that he was the youngest member of the committee, hence it was doubtless prepared by some older and more experienced man; it carries, however, the signatures of the three members of the committee, Tabor then signing himself, H. W. Tabor.

This memorial was only a political gesture, intended to call the attention of the Northern states to the illegal and high-handed way the Federal Government was dealing with those Kansas settlers who were opposed to slavery. The new President, Buchanan, like his predecessor, was dominated by the South and its "beneficent institution." While he had not yet taken office, it was known that he, and his advisors, had no intention of admitting Kansas to statehood with a constitution barring slavery. The South also realized that an attempt to admit Kansas under the fraudulent Lecompton constitution, with its barbarous slavery laws, would be defeated by Congress. The South was now more or less aware that its control of the Federal Government could not last much longer and preparations were being made to secede from the Union if the 1860 election were lost. The leaders of the South knew that it was hopeless to attempt to make Kansas a slave state; all that could be done was to keep it a territory as long as possible.

While as much opposed to slavery as he ever was, Tabor now had other things on his mind, most import-

ant of all being Augusta, whom he had not seen for two years. Therefore, as soon as the Legislature adjourned Tabor hurried East. Augusta received him joyfully, and a few days later they were married in the room in which they first met.

This bride and groom were a well-matched pair, equipped mentally and physically for the arduous labors and hardships of pioneer life. Tabor was a tall, lean, powerful man with the wide shoulders, deep chest, and muscular arms of a pugilist. He was a kindly and generous man and had a fair measure of initiative and ambition. His faults were laziness and extravagance. In short, he had most of the virtues, as well as the vices, of the average man. About all that set him apart from other men were his courage and cheerfulness. He was never down-hearted. Always, he could see a bright future just a little way ahead.

Augusta was quite a different sort of person. Few women were more thrifty or industrious. Seldom did she squander a penny or idle away a moment. Not many men had had more courage, common sense, or initiative, especially in a crisis. While not a large woman, she had great strength and remarkable endurance. In addition to being a level-headed business woman, many of the early pioneers have testified that there was not in Colorado a better cook, or a woman more skilled in the treatment of a fever, a broken limb, or a bowie-knife or gunshot wound. Augusta was more than a helpmate to Tabor. She was a full-fledged partner, and often carried more than her share of the mutual load. Moreover, without her restraining influence in his younger days, it is quite likely that Tabor would have degenerated into

one of those aimless, worthless men always to be found in large numbers in any mining camp.

Augusta's father provided for her handsomely, and when the young couple departed for Kansas on February 25th they had about every needed thing to start housekeeping under frontier conditions.

The journey to Kansas was not an easy trip. What were then termed railroads were little wooden cars hauled by small engines over rough, unballasted tracks. The speeds of today were then impossible. The light iron rails, sharp curves, weak bridges, a right-of-way seldom guarded from wandering livestock, top-heavy cars and engines, only hand-brakes to control the train—all these reduced the rate of travel to what would now seem a snail's pace. Ten, fifteen, twenty miles an hour—slowly the trains crept from town to town. The dirty, ill-smelling coaches, with their hard and uncomfortable seats, were cold in winter and hot in summer. At nearly every important city it was necessary to transfer from one railroad to another, and frequently the stations or depots were a mile or more apart.

There were no sleeping- or dining-cars, and the meals to be obtained at the railroad lunch-counters were high in price and vile in quality. These shortcomings were no hardship to the Tabors. Young and healthy they slept soundly in their seats the long night through. And at mealtimes they relished the cold fried chicken and other good New England foods they had brought with them.

The long railroad journey, six or seven days, finally ended at St. Louis, then the limit of the western advance of the iron horse. After considerable delay, they secured passage on one of the crowded Missouri River

steamboats, and a few days later arrived in Kansas City. The river journey was also most uncomfortable, and Augusta drew a long sigh of relief when at last they reached their destination, a dirty little village quite unlike the clean, neat New England town that had always been her home.

Kansas City was then a river port and outfitting post of two thousand people. Here freight was landed from the boats and started on its long journey over the Santa Fé Trail to the Southwest, or West and Northwest over the Oregon Trail to Salt Lake City, to California, and to Oregon. Albert D. Richardson, who passed through there at about the same time as did Mrs. Tabor, speaks of the "immense piles of freight, horses, ox and mule teams receiving merchandise from steamers, scores of immigrant wagons and a busy crowd of whites, Indians, halfbreeds, Negroes, and Mexicans. Carts and horses wallowed in the mud. Drinking saloons abounded and everything wore the accidental, transitory look of new settlements."

From his scanty savings Tabor purchased at Kansas City a yoke of oxen, a wagon, a few farming tools, some seed, and with the possessions of Mrs. Tabor, they started for Deep Creek. Two young men, Samuel B. Kellogg and Nathanael Maxcy, friends of Tabor's and emigrants from New England, joined the party. All the men were armed and carried their weapons openly, hence they were not molested, either in Kansas City or on the road to Deep Creek. Tabor was well known in the Territory. At Kansas City he was recognized as a member of the Topeka Legislature, but the merchants of that town, eager for trade, would not allow anyone to interfere with or molest free-state emigrants.



The roads west from Kansas City was not entirely safe for a free-state man traveling alone. Tabor was glad to have the company of his friends. Both were brave men and accurate shots with their Sharps rifles. For the first few days, while passing through pro-slavery settlements, Mrs. Tabor guided the oxen while the men marched beside the wagon on foot, their rifles ready for instant use.

They arrived at Deep Creek on April 19th. The journey had required nearly two weeks. The rains nearly every day made the road almost impassable. The young bride was tired, homesick, frightened, disgusted. The final straw was when she saw the sort of home Tabor had provided. It was located on the flat, open prairie, with not a house, a stone, a tree, anywhere in sight. The cabin was a single-room affair, only twelve by sixteen feet in size, with only one door and a small window. There was no floor but the earth, and the roof was of split logs on which earth had been piled. The furnishings were a cook-stove, a dilapidated trunk, and a crude bedstead made of poles on which was a dirty old tick filled with prairie grass.

Augusta's reaction to these surroundings was what was to be expected—a long spell of weeping. The outlook was not encouraging. All their money was spent. There was no way they could return to Maine. How to live in this miserable shack, and raise enough food from the land to support them, was a problem this young girl had to solve. She not only had herself and husband to consider, but she was aware that in a few months she would have a child. Except the surgeon at Fort Riley, twenty miles away, there was no physician nearer than Lawrence. Nor was there any woman in

the immediate vicinity to whom she could appeal. So far as she had observed, this was a man's land—a land only for strong and ruthless men, and where women had no place. As she thought of her husband, her alarm was increased. Already she had more or less vaguely sensed the fact that Tabor was not a very strong oak on which she could lean; that if they were to survive, if starvation was to be avoided in this wilderness, she would have to take command. Augusta was then twenty-three years old. Hers had been a sheltered existence. She knew little of mature life; nothing of the things a frontier woman had to face. The future loomed dark—doubly so because of her ignorance. She was panic-stricken, if ever a woman was. Soon, however, from some mysterious inner font, she summoned a flow of courage—a strength that never afterward would desert her.

Drying her tears, Augusta told the men to unload the wagon while she would clean up the cabin. Among other things, she found a number of copies of Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune*, then the chief organ of the abolitionists. These she laid aside, and as soon as the flour was unpacked she made a bowl of paste and proceeded to cover the rough black walnut logs with the newspapers, taking care to paste them right side up so what she termed her library was always before her eyes. As her other belongings were unpacked—blankets, pillows, etc.—she contrived a fairly comfortable bed on the poles Tabor had used for a resting place. Next, with a large box for a table, and smaller boxes for chairs, and with the table linen and silver she had brought with her, she set the table for the first meal in the new home. It was a success. There was firewood stacked near the cabin, the stove had a good draft, and Augusta was a

gifted cook. Years afterward she modestly recalled: "I can not say it was a very inviting meal, but I did the best I could, and we were all blessed with good appetites."

Aside from building the cabin and digging a well, and plowing a few acres which had been planted to corn, Tabor had not accomplished much during the two years he had lived on this claim. With Augusta to urge him on, with the help of two young and strong oxen, Tabor now started to farm in earnest. He plowed a large field and seeded it with corn, chopped and hauled logs and made a shelter for the oxen, built a rail fence around Mrs. Tabor's garden, and constructed a fox-proof coop, as well as a runway, for her chickens.

Mrs. Tabor was not idle. She had the garden and the chickens to look after, and the task of preparing meals for Tabor and his two friends. The money these men paid for board was what supported the Tabors during their first summer in Kansas.

Early in June Tabor left Augusta alone in their cabin and went to Topeka to attend another meeting of the Free State Legislature. The session lasted four days and a number of excellent measures were passed. The new Territorial Governor, Walker, did not interfere with the proceedings.

There was not much warfare in Kansas during 1857. The free-state men were content with the gains they had made the previous year. The pro-slavery men, because they were so greatly outnumbered, had about ceased their raids. There was some excitement at Lawrence when in July the town was invaded by United States troops to prevent what Governor Walker had been told was a rebellion, but which was merely the formation of a town government.

The summer of '57 was unusually dry, there being no rain for months. The crops Tabor had planted with so much care and at the cost of great labor were a complete failure. As Augusta had feared, they were now face to face with starvation. Meanwhile, her child, a boy, was born, which made the situation worse. What with the constant fear of Indian raids, and the other perils of the frontier, Mrs. Tabor was not inclined to do so, but finally she insisted that Tabor leave her alone in the cabin and again seek work at Fort Riley. While still weak from her confinement Mrs. Tabor looked after the oxen, and also attended to her poultry, of which she now had a large flock. The two boarders had been compelled to abandon their claims and seek work elsewhere. Their money was all gone, and with the crop failure, their condition was as bad as that of the Tabors.

There were no horses in the neighborhood, the settlers all using oxen. A horse was a luxury few of the emigrants could afford. It also required much courage and constant watchfulness to keep a horse. One temptation an Indian could not resist was to steal a horse from a white man. There were other thieves. On the frontier were many desperate men who would not hesitate to kill a man in order to secure his horse. Tabor therefore walked the twenty miles to Fort Riley. At the fort were plenty of horses, since it was a cavalry post. It was not long before Tabor could borrow a horse whenever he wanted it for a week-end trip to his home. He always returned laden with eggs and chickens from Mrs. Tabor's flock. Their income from this source was almost as much as Tabor earned as a stone-cutter.

At that time Fort Riley had been established but a

few years and was a lonely post with a small garrison. General Custer's wife, who died recently, wrote the following vivid picture of Fort Riley as she viewed it ten years later:

"As I had heard more and more about Indians since reaching Kansas, a vision of the enclosure where we would eventually live was a great comfort to me. I could scarcely believe that the buildings, a story and a half high, placed around a parade-ground, were all there were at Fort Riley. No trees, and hardly any vegetation except the buffalo grass that curled its sweet blades close to the ground, as if to protect the nourishment it held from the blazing sun. The plains, as they waved away on all sides of us, like the surface of a vast ocean, had the charm of great novelty, and the absence of trees was at first forgotten in the fascination of seeing such an immense stretch of country, with soft undulations of green turf rolling on, seemingly to the setting sun."

It was a similar landscape, now turned to brown and yellow from the drought, which confronted Mrs. Tabor that fall, alone in her cabin with her new-born child. Loneliness was not all she had to dread. Despite the stout walls of the cabin, she lived in constant fear of her life. Indians were numerous, but fortunately they made no attack on the cabin. It was such a miserable shack that doubtless they thought it would yield but small loot. More than the Indians, Augusta feared the rattlesnakes. They were continually crawling into the cabin to escape the burning sun, which that fall blazed down on the parched land with a fury Mrs. Tabor said she never afterward experienced. While she did her best to keep them out of the cabin, they were always eluding her vigilance. She said that so great was her

fear of these deadly reptiles that whenever she sat down it was on a three-legged stool with her feet tucked under her.

Tabor remained at Fort Riley until about the first of the year. With his earnings, and the income from the chickens, they now had money enough to buy food for several months. With part of their savings Mrs. Tabor purchased two cows.

To make amends for the drought of the previous summer, Mother Nature now blessed Kansas with a mild and pleasant winter, followed by abundant rains during the spring and summer. The result can be imagined. No soil is richer than this section of Kansas. Tremendous crops were produced—for which there was no market. Mrs. Tabor said that eggs dropped to three cents a dozen, and shelled corn to twenty cents a bushel.

The Tabors were now, for the moment, free from the threat of starvation, but there were many things of which they were in dire need. Their clothes were in rags, they had no money to buy such luxuries as coffee, sugar, or tobacco. The thrifty Augusta did, however, accumulate a few dollars by serving meals, and selling butter, eggs, and chickens to emigrants passing by to locate on free land farther west.

Despite the optimism of her husband, Mrs. Tabor was much discouraged during the winter of 1858-59. True, they had a roof over their heads, such as it was; it leaked like a sieve each time it rained. There was plenty of corn, potatoes, and other vegetables to last until the next harvest. They also had chickens, eggs, and milk. Now and then they had meat—game killed by Tabor or some of the neighbors. But it was the future

that worried Augusta. She longed for civilization. She hated the perils and hardships of frontier life. She did not care to have her young son grow up amid the conditions she then faced. She little realized that for many years her surroundings would be much worse before they finally grew better. Gloomy as was the outlook in Kansas that winter, a few months later it was to seem a paradise.

As the abundant crops of the past season had demonstrated, there was a rainbow in Kansas, but the pot of gold was lacking. The Tabor's were intelligent enough to realize that this treasure would never be theirs until railroads were built to haul their crops to the markets in the eastern cities. There was now no immediate prospect that these railroads would be built. The panic of '57 was the worst the country had ever experienced. The construction of railroads was almost at a standstill.

## CHAPTER VI

### EARLY COLORADO

IN JANUARY, 1859, in the little cabin on Deep Creek, Tabor and his wife were enduring a miserable existence. The hut was almost buried in a snow drift. The weather was bitter cold, the temperature remaining below zero for days at a time. The north wind never ceased, and its icy blasts swept into the cabin and penetrated through and through the thin rags to which their clothes were now reduced. To add to their troubles, the baby was sick and there was no doctor to consult or medicine to give relief. Mrs. Tabor audibly recalled, perhaps too often, the comfortable home of her childhood. Tabor, in return, spoke of the happy and carefree life he had led before he was married. To forget their sufferings, they turned their minds to the future, but they could find no rainbow shining in the sky. All they could vision was an endless repetition of the hardships they had encountered ever since they came to Kansas.

With such a dismal outlook before them, it was with pathetic credulity that the Tabors listened to a strange tale by a neighbor that seemed to offer a solution of their troubles. This was in February, and the story was told by a man who had been with the Green Russell party in the Rocky Mountains the previous summer. He had made the return trip across the Plains on horseback in the depth of winter, arriving at Deep Creek nearly dead from exposure and lack of food. But his spirits were high, for he had escaped death, and sus-



pended from a thong around his neck was a small but heavy buckskin bag filled with that yellow metal which, since the dawn of civilization, men have freely risked their lives to obtain.

We will now leave Tabor and his young wife in their rude log cabin—restless, lonely, discouraged, but buoyed up by a faint hope—and travel elsewhere for a while.

Until the close of the war with Mexico in 1848, that nation had claimed all of what is now Colorado except the section north of the Arkansas River and east of the mountains. With the end of the war, all this region became American soil.

Aside from Santa Fé traders, trappers, Pacific Coast emigrants, Mexicans, and Mormons, not many white men had ventured any great distance west of the Missouri River prior to 1858. But little was known of that vast area which is now Colorado. The overland traffic to the Pacific Coast was over routes either to the south or to the north. It was then considered difficult, if not impossible, to cross the Rocky Mountains through this region.

Unless one is familiar with the geography of Colorado, it is difficult to understand why that territory should have so long remained without white inhabitants. It was in 1607 that the English made their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia. Cartier, in 1535, had attempted to plant a French colony on the St. Lawrence; the French finally made a permanent lodgment at Quebec in 1608. It was only a year later that a Spanish settlement, Santa Fé, was established less than a hundred miles from the southern boundary of Colorado. While the French and English settlements

soon covered all the Atlantic seaboard, and spread west rapidly to the Mississippi River, over two and a half centuries were to elapse before Colorado was to be thoroughly explored and a considerable white population find homes within its borders.

As late as 1880 the western part of Colorado had but few white settlers. There were a number of small mining camps in the San Juan country—Silverton, Ouray, Lake City—but these could only be reached by wagon roads from the railroad far to the south, and which ended at Durango. North to the Wyoming line, there was not a settlement of any kind, except the Indian agency at Los Pinos on the Uncompahgre River, and the agency of the Northern Utes on the White River. Red Cliff, twenty-odd miles from Leadville, was then the outpost settlement in northwestern Colorado. The eastern part of Colorado was equally bare of population, there being but a few small settlements on the railroads which entered the State from the east.

While it is possible that the Spaniards may have entered Colorado at an earlier date, it is more likely that the first white men to invade the territory were a party of French traders, led by the Mallet brothers, who reached there in 1739. From the Missouri River they traveled up the Platte, followed the south fork of that stream to the mountains, and then turned south to Santa Fé. Here they sold at a good profit their pack-train of merchandise. This was one of the earliest Santa Fé trading ventures. Not until many years later, in 1821, did William Becknell establish the Santa Fé Trail through Kansas by ascending the Arkansas River and then turning south to Santa Fé.

Becknell was not the first to venture up the Arkansas.

In 1763 a band of French traders proceeded up that stream to the present site of Pueblo. Here they disposed of their goods to the Indians and to Mexican buyers who arrived from Santa Fé and Taos. Thus they avoided the punishment usually inflicted on any foreign merchants who dared to invade Spanish territory.

The year 1765 marks the first discovery of silver in Colorado. The governor of New Mexico, Don Tomás Vélez Cachupín, decided to explore the country northwest of Santa Fé. The expedition followed the only feasible route, which was up the Rio Grande River. Silver ore was discovered in the San Juan region and in later years the mines were worked to an unknown extent.

By 1779 the Spaniards had partly succeeded in their efforts to colonize New Mexico, but the Indians were a constant source of trouble. To punish a band of Comanches who had been guilty of several murders, the governor, Juan Bautista Anza, collected a force of about seven hundred men. He pursued the Indians up the Rio Grande and then followed their trail east to the Arkansas River, crossing the Sangre de Cristo range over Poncha Pass. The Indians were finally overtaken south of where Cañon City is now located. Here, in a hard-fought battle, they were routed and a considerable number killed. It is probable that Anza and his troops were the first white men to penetrate the valley of the upper Arkansas. Anza was one of the ablest and bravest executives who ever governed Spanish territory. His name appears frequently in the histories of early California. One of his first exploits was in 1774, when he established an overland route from Sonora to San Francisco Bay. The next year he led a party of settlers from Tubac to California. Poorly equipped, they suffered

great hardships, but Anza brought them all through safely.

In 1803, hard pressed for money and realizing that he could not defend New Orleans against the British navy, Napoleon sold to the United States for \$11,250,000 a vast domain since known as the Louisiana Purchase. In this area of nearly a million square miles there were less than fifty thousand white inhabitants, most of whom were to be found in or near New Orleans. The first official exploration of this region by the United States was the Lewis and Clark expedition, which left St. Louis on May 14, 1804. This party did not pass through Colorado but reached the Pacific Coast by a route far to the north.

Two years later James Wilkinson, then governor of Louisiana Territory, directed Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike to make an exploration of the upper reaches of the Arkansas and Red rivers. With a force of twenty-two men, and accompanied by fifty-one Osage and Pawnee Indians, Pike left St. Louis on July 15, 1806. Escaping a Spanish force sent to turn him back, he turned south to the Arkansas and proceeded up that stream to the present site of Pueblo, where he built a log redoubt. After an attempt to climb the peak which since has borne his name, he resumed his journey up the Arkansas, penetrating to its headwaters near Tennessee Pass. He now retraced his steps for a short distance, and then turned to the south to search for the source of the Red River. It was doubtless over Poncha Pass that he crossed the Sangre de Cristos and entered a flat open country, San Luis Park. He soon arrived at a large stream which he thought was the Red River and therefore American territory. Unfortunately for Pike, the

stream was the Rio Grande and in Spanish territory. Pike crossed to the opposite side and on a small tributary, Conejos Creek, he built and fortified a log cabin. Here, on February 26, 1807, he was captured by a Spanish force of about a hundred men. Pike and his followers were escorted to Santa Fé, where their papers were confiscated. Later they were taken to Chihuahua. All were eventually released and returned to American territory.

While in Santa Fé, Pike met a Kentuckian, James Purcell, or Pursley, who had arrived there two years before. Previously, according to the story he told Pike, he had been trapping for beaver near the source of the South Platte River. On that stream, or one of its tributaries, he had found a number of gold nuggets. But since there was nothing in that wilderness for which he could trade the gold, and as the nuggets were a heavy burden to carry, eventually he threw them away. Later, when he arrived in Santa Fé, he told the Mexicans of his find. They demanded that he lead them to the discovery. He refused, the reason, he told Pike, being that he feared an invasion of American territory and the gaining of gold which belonged to the United States. Improbable as it now seems, Purcell evidently did find gold at the place he described because several rich placers were later discovered at the source of the South Platte.

The popularity of the white beaver hat had greatly increased the demand for beaver fur. As a consequence, American and French trappers were soon traveling all over the Far West. From the Purcell story it is evident that these adventurous men had invaded Colorado as early as 1803, or before. In 1814 Joseph Philbert and a

party of trappers proceeded up the Arkansas and spent the trapping season near the present Pueblo.

The next year another trapping party, led by Auguste P. Chouteau and Jules de Mun, invaded Colorado by the Arkansas River route. These trappers were later captured by a Spanish military detachment and imprisoned at Santa Fé. Eventually all were released, but their furs and other goods were confiscated and they were compelled to leave the territory.

But all the efforts of the Spanish authorities could not prevent the trappers from entering Colorado. Up either the Arkansas or the South Platte, they invaded the forbidden territory in increasing numbers. They explored nearly all the streams on the eastern slopes of the mountains; some of the more courageous ascended the rivers to their sources in the high peaks, and a lesser number crossed the mountains and trapped the streams in Western Colorado. By 1828 there were enough trappers on the western slopes to warrant Antoine Robidou establishing a trading post to take care of their needs. It was named Fort Uncompahgre, and it was located on the Gunnison River near the mouth of the Uncompahgre. Another point where the trappers gathered to sell their furs and purchase supplies was near the present Denver.

In 1820 another government exploring party entered Colorado. While the trappers had all that information, Major Long was instructed to search for the source of the Platte River, which was believed to rise in the Colorado Rockies, and then travel south and endeavor to find the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers. With nineteen men, he left Council Bluffs on June 6th and a month later camped on the present site of Denver.

After attempting to scale some of the mountains in that vicinity, but making no effort to locate the source of the South Platte, the expedition started for the Arkansas. While in camp at the present Colorado Springs, three of the party made an ascent of Pike's Peak, the first by white men. Four men, a few days later, ascended the Arkansas River until brought to a halt by the Royal Gorge. No attempt was made to pass this barrier. Thus ended the abortive Long expedition, so far as it concerns Colorado. One detachment now proceeded down the Arkansas, and Long, with the remainder, turned to the south and followed the Canadian to its junction with the Arkansas.

As has been observed, nearly all the early explorers of Colorado eventually reached the present site of Pueblo. One notable figure who stopped there for a short time was Jacob Fowler. En route to Santa Fé with a pack-train of merchandise, but uncertain as to the reception awaiting him there, in the winter of 1822 he built a log cabin on the Arkansas close to where Pueblo now stands. Soon thereafter he learned that Mexico had thrown off the Spanish yoke and it was safe to venture into New Mexico. He proceeded to Taos, where he disposed of his goods, and then, with several of his men, ascended the Rio Grande on a trapping expedition. They penetrated to where Pike had built his fortified camp fifteen years before. While perhaps the world's worst speller, Fowler was a keen observer and the journal he kept of his wanderings, despite its violation of every rule of English composition, is an absorbing and trustworthy narrative.

Above Pueblo, in 1826, the Bent brothers, trappers and Indian traders, built their first stockade. This loca-

tion being too far from where the Indians chose to trade, two years later the Bents erected another stockade out on the Plains and near the mouth of the Purgatory River. Soon after, in partnership with Ceran St. Vrain, they began the construction of the famous Bent's Fort. It was located a few miles northeast of the present La Junta. This huge structure, with its high and thick adobe walls, was for years a meeting-place for trappers, Indian traders, Mexicans, soldiers, and explorers. It figures in nearly every tale of the Early Southwest.

Dick Wooton, a familiar figure in Denver until his death in 1908, was an early Colorado trapper. With a party of eighteen men, in 1838 he traveled up the Arkansas to its source near Tennessee Pass, crossed over that defile, then marched north to the Green River, and later pushed on to Oregon. The return trip was down the West Coast and through Arizona and New Mexico. The journey required five years.

Lacking such an admirable press-agent as Frémont, Wooton never gained the renown that came to Kit Carson. But in the two decades preceding the Civil War he was as well known in the Far West as Jim Bridger, Bill Williams, Jim Beckwourth, St. Vrain, or the Bent brothers. With the decline of the fur trade, he turned to other occupations. One of his enterprises was a toll-road over Raton Pass. This was a rough wagon-road he built to take the place of a mule-trail. He gained a handsome income from the tolls it yielded, although frequently he had to collect them at the point of a rifle.

Wooton was one of the founders of Denver, arriving at what was then known as Auraria on Christmas Eve, 1858. He had a wagon loaded with whiskey and other



merchandise, which he intended to sell to the Indians. The hundred or more gold-seekers then camped at Auraria insisted that he sell them the contents of his wagon. He consented, moved into a log cabin, and opened the first store in the camp.

By 1840 the fur trade had seen its best days. The last big rendezvous was held on the Green River in that year. Soon thereafter the trappers began to leave the mountains, the majority returning to St. Louis and the East. A few, unwilling to live a civilized life, began to trade with the Indians. In 1843 a group of them erected a square adobe structure on the Arkansas River at Fountain Creek—Fort Pueblo. It had walls about eight feet high, with round bastions at each corner, and contained a number of rooms backing against the outside walls and opening into a court. Here the traders stored their goods and lived with their Mexican and Indian wives. According to Charles Bent, they gained most of their income by selling Mexican whiskey to the Indians.

John C. Frémont, with Kit Carson as his guide, on June 10, 1842, left the Missouri River on the first of his several explorations of the Far West. By education, courage, endurance, and initiative, he was well fitted to the task. While much of the country he traversed was known to the early trappers, but few of these adventurers had the ability or inclination to preserve in written form the stories of their discoveries. Frémont was not only a keen observer who jotted down everything of interest that he saw, but later expanded his notes into a series of narratives that today are of absorbing interest. Better accounts of explorations into unknown regions have never been written. Since he did not have instruments as accurate as those of today, his

astronomical observations were not always correct. But the errors were slight, and the maps which accompany his narratives are models of their kind and differ only in a small degree from those of today.

Journeying up the Platte River, at the forks of that stream Frémont and four other men left the main party and followed the South Platte to a trading-post, St. Vrain's Fort, located about ten miles southwest of the present Greeley. From here Frémont turned north and rejoined the main party on the Oregon Trail. That fall the expedition returned to St. Louis, after having advanced as far west as the Wind River Mountains. While there, Frémont climbed the peak which bears his name. His account of that ascent is an almost perfect example of descriptive writing.

That intrepid missionary, Marcus Whitman, who was later to be slain by the Indians, crossed the southwest corner of Colorado in the winter of 1842-43. This journey, through deep snows and in bitter cold weather, by horseback and on foot, from Oregon to St. Louis, was a remarkable feat of courage and endurance.

In the spring of 1843 Frémont started on another and more ambitious exploration. Again crossing the Plains, he became impatient with the slow progress of the expedition. With about a dozen men, he pushed ahead of the main party and soon arrived at St. Vrain's Fort. From there he traveled south to the new Fort Pueblo, where he met and reemployed Kit Carson to act as guide. Returning to St. Vrain's, he now proceeded up the Cache la Poudre in an effort to cross the Continental Divide. Finding it impossible, he turned north to the Oregon Trail, which was followed to the Pacific Coast. At the Dalles of the Columbia he changed his

course to the south, and after terrible hardships the party eventually reached Sutter's Fort in California. The return trip was up the San Joaquin River, and then by the old Spanish Trail to Utah Lake. From there he veered to the east, crossed the extreme northwest corner of Colorado, proceeded along the southern boundary of Wyoming, and at the North Platte River turned south and entered Colorado through North Park. He continued on through South Park to the valley of the Arkansas, arriving at Fort Pueblo on June 28, 1844.

In 1845 Frémont again explored Colorado on his journey to the Pacific Coast; where, a year later, he was to have an active part in freeing California from Mexican rule. At Bent's Fort he divided his party, sending a detachment south to explore the Canadian River. With a notable company of frontiersmen, and with Kit Carson again acting as guide, Frémont now ascended the Arkansas, passed to the right of the Royal Gorge, again reached the Arkansas a few miles below the present Leadville, and crossed the Continental Divide over Tennessee Pass. He now proceeded down the Eagle River to its junction with the Grand, then turned north to the White, which he descended to where it joins the Green River.

The United States declared war on Mexico on May 13, 1846. Shortly thereafter what was known as the Army of the West was organized at Fort Leavenworth. That summer this force of about two thousand men marched over the Santa Fé Trail to Bent's Fort. After a short rest, the journey was resumed and, crossing over Raton Pass, all of New Mexico was soon American territory.

Among other reinforcements sent to the Army of the West was the Mormon Battalion, which enlisted in order that its members might reach California. It numbered some five hundred men, and they were permitted to take along a number of women to serve as laundresses. All of the women and about a hundred of the weaker men spent the winter of 1846-47 near Fort Pueblo, where they erected a small village of huts and log cabins. The march of the remainder of the Battalion to California is one of the epics of American history.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 resulted in further exploration of the Far West. Exploration is perhaps not the right term. Like the early trappers, the gold-seekers were not at all interested in the country they passed through. They were preoccupied chiefly with their search for the yellow metal, and to a lesser extent in preserving their lives from the many perils they encountered. Of those who survived, few could recall much of the nature of the land they had traversed.

Following the exhaustion of the California placers, the more adventurous prospectors began to search elsewhere. There are few records of their wanderings, but it is known that they traveled all over the Far West, some of them penetrating the mountains of Colorado. An early pioneer, Wolfe Londoner, afterward mayor of Denver, and who was in California in 1850, said that Cache Creek, near Leadville, took its name from a party of nine prospectors from California who, in 1854, while washing for gold on that stream, were besieged by a band of Ute Indians. They buried, or "cached," all their food and other supplies and at night escaped from the ambush. Only one man, however, survived the terrible journey west to Salt Lake City. The others fell victims

to thirst, starvation, and the arrows of the Utes. The story of the survivor, and stories told by other prospectors who escaped with their lives from these mountains, caused rumors to spread that gold was to be found near Pike's Peak.

There were earlier discoveries. In the spring of 1849 a small party of white men and Cherokee Indians traveled to the Pacific Coast by a route that took them through Colorado. They followed the Arkansas to Fort Pueblo, and then turned north and skirted the mountains, striking the Oregon Trail near Fort Laramie. Experienced placer miners, having worked in the placers and lode mines near Dahlonega, Georgia, they knew how to search for gold. Many of the streams they crossed were "panned," and while a small amount of gold was obtained, the quantity was not enough to justify abandoning their trip to the California diggings.

Included in this party were three brothers, Green, Oliver, and Levi Russell. Evidently they did not meet with much success on the Pacific Coast; by 1852 they were all back in Georgia. But to men who had crossed the continent in '49, life in Georgia at that time must have been very dull and uninteresting. As a magnet, the Kansas struggle drew Green and Oliver Russell to that Territory. A few miles north of the Tabor homestead was a small stream called Rock Creek. Among other settlers who located on or near Rock Creek in the spring of '57 were Green Russell, his brother Oliver, and two nephews, James and Robert Pierce. The Russells purchased a farm from James Darnell and prepared to stay in Kansas.

Meanwhile, some of the Cherokees, who had not forgotten the gold they had panned in Colorado, began

to plan an expedition to that region. This was in the summer of 1857. Green Russell learned of the contemplated trip. He was well acquainted with all the Cherokees, having married a squaw of that tribe. Evidently he could see no immediate prospect of gaining wealth from a Kansas farm, and being a man of considerable initiative and courage, he decided to join the Cherokees. The farm was sold to his nephews and, with his brother, Green returned to Georgia to help organize the expedition.

Early the next spring the two Russell brothers, and several relatives and friends, were at Rock Creek. Final preparations were soon completed, and on May 12th the party started west over the Santa Fé Trail, where they were joined by the Cherokees. Accounts differ as to how many were in the party. One states that the company numbered twelve white men and thirty Indians. Another says that there were about a hundred Indians. They followed the same route they had traversed in 1849, stopping at Fort Pueblo to rest their animals.

Fort Pueblo, then deserted, not long before had been the scene of a bloody massacre. On Christmas Eve, 1854, its seventeen occupants were attacked by a party of Ute Indians. After a brave fight, all were slaughtered but one woman, Mrs. Sandoval, and her two children, who were taken prisoners. The children were afterward rescued but Mrs. Sandoval was killed because, as one of her captors later said, she grieved too much.

The military commander of New Mexico acted promptly. In addition to the regular troops, five companies of mounted volunteers were assembled. Early in February, with Kit Carson acting as guide, they left Fort Union. At that time there were a few Mexican

settlements in San Luis Park, near the southern boundary of Colorado, and Fort Massachusetts had been established to protect them from the Utes. This was the first military post in Colorado. From here the American troops started their campaign against the Indians. During the spring and summer a number of battles were fought. The decisive engagement was near the present town of Salada where forty Indians were killed in a surprise attack. Shortly after the Utes sued for peace, and not until the Meeker massacre and the ambushing of the Thornburg command in 1879, did they reattempt organized warfare against the whites.

The Russell party did not long remain at Fort Pueblo. As soon as their horses were rested they turned north toward Pike's Peak, which now reared its head high above the horizon. They prospected the various streams they crossed and before the summer was over had panned nearly all the water-courses as far north as the Cache la Poudre. There are no authentic records as to the amount of gold they obtained but it was not a great amount.

In addition to the Russell party, several hundred other gold-seekers arrived in Colorado that summer. Few of these men obtained enough gold to repay them for their efforts. With the approach of winter, the majority returned to the East. About two hundred chose to remain, despite the shortage of food and other supplies. Nearly all went into winter quarters near the junction of Cherry Creek and the South Platte. There were two settlements, on either side of Cherry Creek, named Auraria and Denver. While food was scarce, the greatest lack was whiskey. It was like manna from heaven when Dick Wooton arrived there Christmas Eve

with several barrels of Taos "lightning." This fiery Mexican liquor, old pioneers have said, was the rawest and most intoxicating ever distilled.

The stage was now set, or soon would be, for one of the greatest gold rushes ever known. Only a small amount of gold dust had been obtained and no worthwhile discoveries had as yet been made. But this did not deter the newspapers in the Missouri River towns, and elsewhere, from printing the most impossible yarns about the chunks of yellow metal to be found in the Rocky Mountains. In those days the whole world, and especially the United States, was interested in new discoveries of gold. It was only ten years before that gold had first been found in California, thereby causing a flood of immigration such as had never before been witnessed.

The panic that started in 1857 was a serious one. Business was prostrated, and throughout the Middle West and on the frontier thousands of young and able-bodied men were without employment. In desperate need, they accepted as truth the fantastic tales about Colorado which were then being broadcasted. In the winter of 1858-59 they argued that there must be, somewhere in that vast region beyond the Missouri, deposits of gold as rich as those in California.

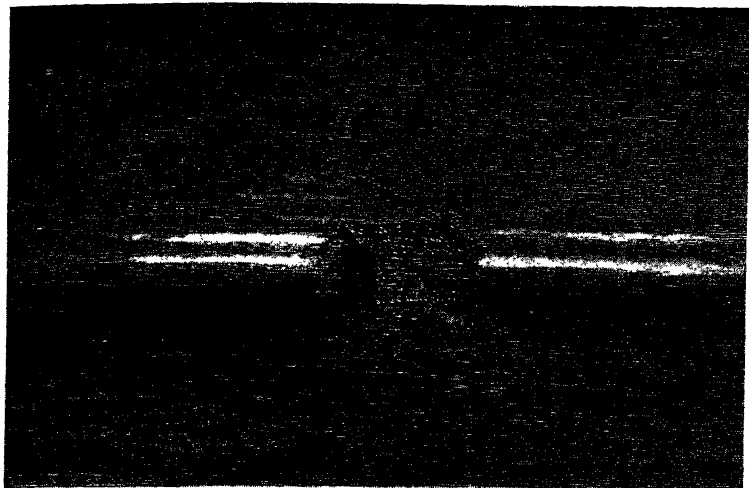
Colorado also had the lure of the unknown. The explorations here outlined were of slight importance. Those of the Spaniards were then unknown because recorded in a foreign language and the accounts buried in government archives. Not until recent years have some of them been translated into English and made available in printed form. The report of the Long expedition had but a limited circulation. The trappers



were not explorers. Few could either read or write. Many were such unmitigated liars that those who told what seemed to be the truth were not often believed. We now know, however, that singly or in groups, from 1800 to 1840, they roamed over much of Colorado. But it was only the streams that they explored, and then only in winter when the fur was "prime." It is doubtful if those who invaded Colorado ever numbered more than a few score at any one time. A hardy, brave, but dissolute class of men, they left few written records of their travels and adventures, and few of these were available in 1859. With the collapse of the fur trade, nearly all the trappers soon disappeared. Frémont, in his account of his 1843 expedition, said that while in Colorado he had difficulty in finding old trappers who could give him information about the country he intended to explore.

It was Frémont's narratives that first gave the outside world a clear glimpse of Colorado. Written in a terse and interesting style, and accompanied by accurate maps, they give a vivid and truthful picture of the Far West previous to the California gold rush. But his explorations covered only a small section of Colorado. Nearly all the remainder was an unknown land where, if the imagination were given free rein, a vast wealth of gold awaited strong and courageous men. True, there were Indians to be fought, grizzly bears to be slain, and there was the wide desert first to be crossed, where thirst and starvation would likely be encountered. But to idle and desperate men, many of whom were more or less familiar with frontier life, these perils ranked only as minor annoyances. Therefore, early in 1859, they began to gather along the Missouri

River, eager and ready to start for the Rocky Mountains as soon as the winter snows had melted. That spring and summer, a hundred-thousand-strong or more, they streamed westward across the Plains. Not a man but was confident that he would soon return burdened with gold. But few succeeded. Of those who did reach the mountains, and these numbered less than half of those who started, all but a few thousand returned to east of the Missouri before the end of the year.



*The Tabor Cabin at Deep Creek, in 1857*



*Crossing the Plains in '59*

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## ACROSS THE PLAINS

WILLIAM DARNELL, in his Kansas reminiscences, says that it was late in the fall of 1858 that Green Russell and his nephew, Robert Pierce, returned to Rock Creek and stopped at his father's house. Alighting from his horse and entering the cabin, Pierce tossed a buckskin sack on the table, saying to Darnell's mother, "Aunt Lottie, see what I've got." Darnell never knew how much gold dust there was in the bag, but he recalled that his mother said it required considerable exertion to lift it. Placer gold then was worth about two hundred dollars a pound, hence it is not likely that the bag contained more than a thousand dollars. Small as that amount seems today, then it was a considerable fortune.

It was a story similar to this one that the Tabors listened to in February, 1859, and when they were asked to test the weight of a similar bag of the precious metal they were convinced that opportunity was at last knocking on their door. Then and there, they resolved to make a supreme effort to secure a share of that wealth which seemed to be so easy to obtain from the streams of Colorado. If "thar wuz gold in them thar hills," they were determined to find it.

Mrs. Tabor had the choice of returning to her parents in Maine or casting her lot with her husband. Never was there a doubt as to her decision. Her courage was equal to Tabor's, and she had more initiative.

The Tabors were well aware that a trip such as they planned—a long journey into what was to them an unexplored wilderness—was not to be lightly undertaken. Money was necessary to buy the many things they needed. Tabor therefore left Deep Creek immediately and worked as a stone-cutter at Fort Riley during February and March, saving every penny he could for the new venture.

There was an early spring in Kansas that year, accompanied by heavy rains. By the first of April the banks of the streams began to show a green fringe—evidence that it was safe to start for the Rockies. In those days travel across the Plains was only possible when there was grass to sustain the animals used for transportation. And as the Santa Fé traders and the trappers had first discovered, and later the California and Oregon emigrants, it was necessary to start as early in the spring as the grass would permit.

There was much debate as to which route to choose. The shortest and best trail, that up the Smoky Hill River, was unknown at that time, or if known, was not thought safe for an ox-team. It was well that the Tabors avoided this route. Not until the following year did the H. T. Green surveying party find a way to escape the stretch of eighty-five miles without water which in '59 caused so many deaths and so much suffering.

The Santa Fé route, the one used by the Green Russell party, was the best known, but a study of the map showed it was longer than the other trails. Any consideration of it was soon abandoned because the Tabors wished to reach the new diggings as soon as possible and before all the good placer claims had been taken.

Traveling by ox-team, there were objections to the Oregon Trail route. From the Tabor homestead there was a well-traveled route to the Northwest, which joined the Oregon Trail near Kearney, Nebraska. From there it was an easy journey to Julesburg, but at that point it was necessary to bear to the left and proceed up the South Platte to Denver. This stretch of nearly two hundred miles was then almost impassible for ox-teams. As late as 1865 Lieut. J. R. Fitch reported:

"From Julesburg to Denver the emigrant or freighter has a dead pull of sand, without a stick of timber or a drop of living water, save the Platte itself, which is from three to five miles from the road; and when it is taken into consideration that a loaded ox-team makes but from twelve to fourteen miles a day, and never exceeds sixteen, it will not pay and will double the distance to drive to the Platte (the only water in the country) for the purpose of camping, and all will admit that the Platte waters are so strongly impregnated with alkali as to render it dangerous to water stock in it. The carcasses now lining the road along the Platte bear evidence to its destructive qualities."

The Tabors finally decided to take what was later known as the Republican River route. According to the map, which was a bare outline, this was the shortest way. They had also been told by the man from the Green Russell party, who had returned over it on horseback, that everywhere there was good grass and water.

It was on the fifth of April, in 1859, that the Tabors yoked their ox-team and two cows, loaded their wagon with their belongings and what food and other supplies they could afford to purchase, and accompanied by their young boy and Tabor's two friends, Kellogg and Maxcy, started for the Rocky Mountains.

Judged by the standards of modern explorers, this little band of fortune-seekers was not very well equipped.

Their wagon was in good condition, and the oxen were young and strong, but that was about all there was on the right side of the ledger.

Unlike nearly all other travelers to the new diggings, the Tabors had a cook-stove. Mrs. Tabor abhorred campfires, declaring that only with a cook-stove could meals be properly prepared.

In addition to clothing, blankets, a few bushels of potatoes, some corn meal, coffee, molasses, and a small amount of smoked meat, they had a number of bars of lead for running bullets, a keg of black powder, and a scanty assortment of firearms. These included a shotgun, a cap-and-ball revolver, and a couple of ancient muzzle-loading, single-shot, long-barreled Kentucky rifles. The fine Sharps rifles they had when they arrived in Kansas had long since disappeared. One had been stolen, another had been lost when crossing a deep stream, and the third Kellogg and Maxcy had swapped for food and whiskey during the drouth of '57.

Despite the tales handed down about the Kentucky rifle, it was not greatly superior to the bow and arrow used by the Indians. It was a heavy burden to carry, awkward to handle except on foot, took a long time to load, carried a small ball propelled by a weak charge of powder, and its effective range was not much over a hundred yards. Although the West then swarmed with big game, so short was the range of this weapon that it required expert stalking to obtain a successful shot. Its greatest virtue was its accuracy. Up to a hundred yards, these rifles were almost as accurate as modern firearms.

The Tabors had an auspicious start for their journey. They followed a well-marked road of easy grades along the Republican River until the Nebraska line was



reached. The weather was mild and pleasant, settlements were frequent, and there was an abundance of wood and water, as well as rich grazing for the cattle.

The country began to change shortly after they entered Nebraska. Here they turned to the left, leaving the safety of a frequently traveled road, and headed directly west along the north bank of the Republican. They now came to a virgin land with not a single mark of a wagon-wheel to guide them. The last human habitation was now far behind. Soon they passed the last tree they were to see for many a weary mile.

The river also began to change to a wide and shallow ditch, its broad bed, across which the stream meandered from side to side, being a flat but crooked trough of sand, barren of any vegetation. Close to the low banks, and stretching away as far as the eye could see in every direction, was a thin carpet of buffalo grass, now a brilliant green, but soon to change to a dull brown. They were out on the Great Plains—the buffalo country, as it was then called.

If it had not been for the constant dread of an Indian attack, this part of the journey would not have been unpleasant. It was now the middle of May and the country was at its best. The nights were cool, and during the day the sun did not blaze down as it would a few weeks later. The mornings were delightful, the atmosphere then having a crystal clearness that magnified distant objects in a most surprising way. It was a land of enchantment. The vast and impressive solitude, without a sign of human habitation, while awe-inspiring, gave to the beholder an elation and a sense of freedom and well-being never to be forgotten.

The Tabor camp was usually astir at daybreak, at

which time Mrs. Tabor was busy at the cook-stove, which had its position under an awning at the rear of the wagon. After a breakfast of hot corn bread, salt pork, fried potatoes, and coffee, it required but a few minutes for the three men to strike the camp, yoke the cattle, and be on their way. There was usually a halt of two hours or more at noon to rest and graze the cattle, after which they pushed on until dark. While Mrs. Tabor cooked the evening meal by the light of a candle, which was usually game shot during the day, a small tent was pitched, in which Kellogg and Maxcy slept. The Tabors had their bed within the canvas-covered wagon, and here little Maxcy Tabor slept and played while the wagon jolted across the prairies.

The little caravan made slow progress. Every few miles they came to a tributary of the main stream. Crossing these rivulets was a difficult problem, or rather, a series of problems, for no two were alike. They usually had high, steep banks on each side, hence it was frequently necessary to detour for miles before a place could be found that had banks low enough, and a stream-bed sufficiently hard, to permit a passage.

To avoid or shorten the detours, they lowered the banks with pick and shovel, piled sage brush on the sandy bed of the stream, and partly unloaded the wagon and carried its contents across piecemeal, before the oxen could pull the heavy wagon through the sand and up the opposite bank.

Experience soon taught them an easier way to cross the gullies they encountered. Part of their equipment was a heavy block-and-tackle. When the bank was unusually steep, a heavy stake was driven in the ground beyond the crest of the rise, and with one end of the

tackle fastened to the stake, the other to the tongue of the wagon, and with three strong men tugging at the rope, while Mrs. Tabor goaded the oxen to their best efforts, the huge wagon would roll slowly through the deep sand and up the short but heavy grade.

Thus they toiled, from daybreak to dark, but despite all their efforts, they advanced but a few miles daily.

There were interruptions to this slow progress. It was early spring and there were frequent and violent storms. The rain would come down as a cloudburst, usually accompanied by hail. For a short time the streams would overflow their banks, and every dry gully would carry a raging torrent. Fortunately, the storms did not last long and seldom were they delayed more than a few hours.

They did not travel on Sundays, for several reasons. One was that the cattle had to rest and graze so as to have strength for the coming week. Sunday was also the day for replenishing the larder. Early in the morning, armed with their rifles and the shotgun, the men searched for any game that could be stalked and shot with their short-range weapons. They were handicapped by not having horses. In this flat and open country it was very difficult to approach within gunshot of any game.

Buffalo was most desired, for it brought more pounds of meat per rifle-ball than any other game. They also hunted deer, elk, and antelope, but these were difficult to stalk. It was not unusual for Tabor or one of the other men to spend a whole day endeavoring to get close enough to a herd of antelope to risk a long shot. The prairie-dog and the lowly jack-rabbit were

not overlooked, and during the latter part of the journey rabbits were their principal food.

Sunday brought little rest for Mrs. Tabor. There were no trees along the route after they crossed the Kansas line into Nebraska. For fuel they had to depend on buffalo chips—sun-dried dung of the buffalo. These were often scarce and days would elapse before enough could be gathered for a fire. As a consequence, Mrs. Tabor frequently had to cook on Sunday enough food for the coming week. In addition, she never relaxed her neat New England housekeeping methods, hence every Sunday morning all the laundry for the entire party was flapping on the line.

In '59 the Indians had not organized into large bands and become the menace to travelers they were a few years later. Nevertheless, they were a constant danger to small parties such as the Tabor outfit. On Sundays they frequently annoyed Mrs. Tabor by gathering around the camp to steal whatever they could. Guarding the camp, revolver in hand, she could do no work until the men returned.

Despite what we see in the movies, and read in books written by those who were seldom in close contact with the Plains Indians, the redmen of those days were worse than beasts. No act was too cruel or too vile for them to perpetrate. Mrs. Tabor said they deliberately polluted the sources from which she obtained water, and around the Tabor camps committed every imaginable, but unmentionable, filthy act.

The farther west the Tabors traveled the more obstacles they encountered. At the end of six weeks of heavy toil they crossed the present Kansas-Colorado line. They now began to leave the buffalo range and

soon the food question was acute. Grazing for the cattle also became scanty and before long the animals were thin and weak.

The Republican was no longer the wide, deep stream it was at Fort Riley, but had degenerated into a thin trickle that disappeared under the sand from time to time, to appear again after a short distance. Finally, it vanished completely, but by digging a few feet they managed to secure enough water to supply the cattle and make a camp. The next day this last resource failed them. They had passed the headwaters of the stream. They were no longer traversing a valley, but were in the midst of a tumbled mass of sand hills almost barren of vegetation.

They were now in a desperate situation and there was some talk of turning back. Tabor, the optimist, urged that they push forward. Mrs. Tabor's common sense came to the fore. She persuaded the men that it was best to return to their last camp, where water could be obtained, and where there was some forage for the cattle, and make what preparations they could for the remainder of the journey. Here they rested for several days, while the cattle cropped what little grass there was in the vicinity. Meanwhile, the men searched the surrounding country for game, but met with little or no success.

With the grass exhausted, they had to either go forward or return. Therefore, early one morning, before daybreak, they filled with water all the vessels they had, each took a long drink from the shallow well they had dug, and leaving the dry bed of the Republican, they started west across the low, rolling hills. All that day, and far into the night, they pushed the oxen at

their best speed, but nowhere did they find a sign of water. That night they made a dry camp, doling out what water they could spare to the suffering cattle.

Starting the next morning at daybreak, they continued on their course—as straight west as the contour of the land would permit. While they had a compass, it was not needed, for they had only to keep the sun to their backs during the morning, and to face that burning orb during the long afternoon. As an additional guide, at the top of every hill there was spread before their bloodshot eyes an irregular dark blue line—the Rampart Range of the Rockies. While over a hundred miles away, the higher peaks with their caps of snow were etched clear and sharp against a sapphire sky.

Death was now not far away. They had but to continue their march toward the setting sun and thirst and starvation would have overtaken them. Fortunately, some time during the afternoon of this critical day they came to a well-defined game trail leading to the south. Countless generations of deer, elk, antelope, and other animals had here trodden a path that all could see. It was obvious that such a trail in a land so destitute of water could lead only to a stream. They immediately altered their course, and following the trail, late that night they reached the Big Sandy at a point not far from where the town of Hugo is now located.

The Big Sandy, they found, was big only in name. It was then, as it frequently is now, a miserable little stream carrying but a faint trace of moisture. Using all their remaining strength, the three men, guided by the light from a lantern held by Mrs. Tabor, that night dug

a hole in the sand of the river bed, into which slowly seeped enough water for their immediate needs.

It was now necessary to rest for several days. The cattle were completely exhausted, and their human masters were in an equally bad condition. The food question was also serious. The only large game in the vicinity were deer and antelope, and the men were all too weak to stalk them. They succeeded, however, in bagging a number of jack-rabbits, which Mrs. Tabor cooked and stored away for future use.

When the oxen were again in condition to travel they started up the valley of the Big Sandy. Soon they found that the stream was bearing too far to the south, so they made another all-day dry march across country, late at night finding water at Bijou Creek. They followed this stream for two days, but as its course was not west but almost due north, they left the safety of its banks and headed directly toward the mountains, which now loomed high on the horizon and apparently were but a few miles away.

At the end of a long day's journey, and with the cattle again at the point of exhaustion, they reached the banks of a "bold flowing stream"—Cherry Creek. Here they also encountered a party of prospectors, the first white men they had seen since they left the road to the Oregon Trail at the crossing into Nebraska. Pausing a day for the oxen to recuperate, they resumed their journey, and a few days later were in Denver.

It was now the middle of June. They had been on the road for seventy-two days—two and a half months—to cover a distance that a fast automobile can traverse in twenty-four hours or less.

All the members of the Tabor party, humans as

well as animals, were almost as thin as skeletons when they arrived in Denver. During the whole trip the baby was teething and suffering from fever and ague. That the child survived the hardships of the trip is a remarkable tribute to Mrs. Tabor's skill as a nurse. The journey took its toll Mrs. Tabor; she said she weighed but ninety pounds when they reached Denver.

Crossing the Plains in '59 was a terrible task. Albert D. Richardson, who made the journey that spring, tells of two brothers, from Missouri, who took the Smoky Hill route. One brother died from heat, thirst, and starvation. The other brother lived off the brains in the dead man's skull until he reached Denver. Another immigrant from Illinois lost two brothers along this trail and subsisted off the bodies until he arrived in Denver.

The father of the writer, Felix Gandy, who reached Denver in August of that year by the Platte River route, traveling on foot at night to avoid the Indians, and hiding in tall grass during the day, said these cannibalistic tales had some basis of truth. He encountered human bones recently picked clean, but could not determine if it was the work of white men, Indians, or wolves; nor could he tell if the skeletons were those of white men or Indians. Years later, when chided for not observing more closely, he replied he was then not at all interested in the bones or the lives of other men—that the preservation of his own life was his sole care and thought.

Unlike the Tabors, Felix Gandy was not encumbered with an ox-team and wagon. He was then seventeen years of age, and when he left Council Bluffs, Iowa, early in July, his traveling outfit consisted of a shirt, a



hat, a coat, a pair of overalls, a new pair of boots, a blanket, a small iron skillet, a ten-inch knife he had fashioned from a file, a bag of corn meal, a side of bacon, part of a ham, some salt, and an empty whiskey bottle for a canteen. He also had about five dollars in coin. Having neither revolver nor rifle, his pack weighed less than forty pounds. The boots were most precious, and much of the time he carried them slung over his shoulder. He had gone barefooted for so many years that his feet were calloused to the hardness of a horse's hoof, and on the soft dirt of much of the Oregon Trail his feet did not suffer. Ever afterward he maintained that if a man's feet were properly hardened, on a soft dirt road boots were a handicap and cut down the speed. As proof, he said that after the first few days, when his leg muscles had limbered up, he reeled off his forty miles or more every night, traveling at nearly thrice the speed of an ox-team, double that of a horse- or mule-team; and only one small party of men, mounted on good horses, bettered his time of nineteen days from Council Bluffs to Denver. The distance is about six hundred miles.

He said that it was usually about daybreak that fatigue overcame him. Choosing a patch of tall grass, usually close to the river, he dug a small hole in the ground with his knife. Placing in it some dead grass and a few buffalo chips he had collected, he soon had a hot fire. Meanwhile, with a handfull of corn meal, a pinch of salt, and some water from the whiskey bottle, he had mixed a batter in the skillet. This was soon baked, and, with a slice of the ham, dinner was served.

Going to bed was an equally simple matter. The weather was warm, so he rolled on his side, adjusted his

hat to keep the sun from his face, and his weary body relaxed.

By late afternoon he was rested, or could sleep no longer. A few slices of bacon fried in the skillet, with the remains of the corn pone, was breakfast. Tossing his belongings into the blanket, tying together its ends, and placing the pack on his shoulder, he was ready to march. With an even pace of three to four miles an hour, which he could hold through the hot afternoon and the long, cool night, every hour of daylight he passed scores of heavily loaded wagons, and held his own with, or passed, the travelers on horseback.

## CHAPTER VIII

### COLORADO IN 1859

DENVER, in the summer of '59, was a collection of log huts and tents scattered among the willows and cottonwood trees that grew close to the banks of Cherry Creek at its junction with the South Platte. To the Tabor party, after their long journey across the Plains, it doubtless had an impressive appearance. Not to Richardson, whose description of Kansas City has already been quoted. He said, "It is the most forlorn and desolate metropolis I have ever seen."

During the previous summer and winter the men gathered here had spent their time washing for gold in the near-by streams. The returns were poor, few of the miners securing more than a dollar or two a day. Early in the spring the camp started to break up, some of the men returning to the East, and, as soon as the snow had melted sufficiently, others began to "pan" the various streams toward their sources.

It may be well here to describe briefly the process of panning for gold, as well as mention some of the other methods then used for extracting precious metals.

As to how Mother Nature created gold, there are many theories, but geologists agree that tremendous pressure and great heat were required to hide the metal deep under ground and in veins between solid rocks.

A fissure vein or lode is a body of ore containing gold or silver, or gold and silver, and filling a crack or crevice in the foundation rock with which a mining district is

underlaid. These veins or lodes may run in any direction and vary greatly in width and richness. The first discovery of gold in a district is usually in a stream or gulch. Being one of the heaviest of metals, gold is most often found in the bedrock of a stream or depression. The prospector requires only a shovel and a pan. Digging down to bedrock, he scoops up some of the sand and drops it into the pan, dilutes it with water and, taking the pan in both hands, gives it a rotary motion, at the same time tipping the pan so that the sand and water flow slowly over the side. If there is any gold in the sand, and the operation is properly done, the gold will find its way to the bottom of the pan and, as the sand and water are poured out, become visible to the eye.

Obviously, panning for gold is a slow, laborious, inefficient process, its only virtue being that the equipment required costs but a trifle and can be transported on a man's back wherever he travels. As soon as it is determined by panning that a stream has sufficient gold to make it worth while, more efficient methods come into use. One frequently used by the pioneer gold-seekers was sluicing. Boards whipsawed from a near-by tree would be fastened together to form a flat trough ten to a hundred feet long and a foot or two wide. By means of a dam the stream, or part of the stream, would be diverted from its channel into the sluice-box. On the bottom of the sluice-box would be fastened small cross-strips of wood, quicksilver being placed between the strips. Sand and gravel from the bottom of the stream-bed would now be shoveled into the sluice-box at its upper end. The strong current of water would carry all this material down the sluice-box, the gold sinking to the bottom where it would be caught by the quicksilver.



*Panning for Gold at Payne's Bar, in 1859*



*Placer Mining with a Rocker or Cradle*



There are many variations of the sluicing method, but the principle remains the same—a strong current of water carrying the gold-bearing sands over the quick-silver riffles.

Lode-mining for gold or silver is quite different, is both slow and costly and requires a considerable investment. Sinking the shaft or drilling the tunnel, in hard rock, is but one item of expense. The ore must be blasted, broken, and brought to the surface, and the gold and other metals extracted by different processes, depending on the character of the ore.

To George A. Jackson must be given credit for the first worth-while discovery of gold in Colorado. Trapper, Indian trader, but best remembered for the monumental lies he could tell, Jackson had spent several years in the California gold fields. In the fall of 1858, with two other men, he built a cabin where the town of Golden is now located. One of the men was named Golden, and from him the town later gained its title.

Late in December of that year the three men started to prospect the stream on which their cabin was located. Golden and the other man soon abandoned prospecting and went on a hunting trip, fresh meat being a luxury they all craved. Not meeting with any success on the stream he was prospecting, Jackson, with his two dogs, crossed a high ridge to the north and investigated another stream, Ralston Creek. This too was apparently bare of gold, so he returned to Clear Creek and traveled up the south fork until he came to some hot mineral springs. Here he built a shelter and remained for several days, exploring the various gulches and returning to the shelter at night. The weather was bitter cold, the snow

was deep, and he said that his dogs suffered. It is not likely that Jackson was immune from the weather, although evidently he did lack for food, since he recorded in his diary that one night he had fresh mutton for his supper, having shot a mountain sheep that afternoon.

At last Jackson found a spot that to his experienced eye seemed the likely place to dig for gold. Here he built a huge fire and kept it burning for hours to thaw out the ground. On January 7th he panned out about a half ounce of gold and was satisfied that, with warm weather and the proper tools, he could take from this sand bank a considerable amount of gold. Lacking food, and without pick, shovel, or gold-pan, he marked the spot and returned to the cabin at Golden. Later, in May of that year, he again traveled up Clear Creek, and, locating the sand bar, washed out several thousand dollars' worth of placer gold. This placer was at the mouth of Chicago Creek, in the present town of Idaho Springs, and is marked with a large boulder on a pedestal.

Another experienced gold-seeker who reached Colorado in the late fall of 1858 was John H. Gregory, from Georgia. Traveling south from Fort Laramie, in a stream north of Denver, Clear Creek, he found traces of gold, and the farther up its channel he advanced the more "colors" his pan revealed. He was not especially interested in the gold he thus obtained, what he wanted to find was the source from whence it came. Eventually, not far from where Jackson made his find, and at about the same time, Gregory reached the mouth of a small gulch on North Clear Creek where he thawed the gravel and recovered some coarse gold. Deep snow, sub-zero weather, and lack of food compelled him to return to Denver.



Grubstaked by Wilkes Defrees, about the first of May, Gregory and several other men proceeded up Clear Creek and located the find. Here they staked their claims, and before long Gregory found the "mother lode," an outcropping of rich ore. During aeons of time a small fraction of this ore had been washed into the stream, and it was the nuggets and coarse gold from this ore that Gregory had first discovered. Gregory detected the outcrop of ore because it was the same kind of burnt quartz he had encountered in Georgia.

It was on May 6, 1859 that the famous Gregory lode was discovered. It eventually developed into a great gold-bearing vein that since has yielded millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, Green Russell had returned to Colorado, and following Gregory up the north fork of Clear Creek, in a gulch not far from the Gregory discovery, he also made a rich strike.

The discoveries of these three men—Jackson, Gregory, Russell—were all close together and afterward became the famous Black Hawk gold district.

When the news of these discoveries reached Denver the town was almost depopulated, so anxious was everyone to gain a share of the wealth the gulches were yielding. The other gold-seekers, who were now crossing the Plains by the thousands, also rushed to the new district. Within a few weeks nearly all the desirable ground along the various ravines was staked out. As discoverer, Gregory obtained two claims on the Gregory lode, which he soon sold to E. W. Henderson and A. Gridley for twenty-one thousand dollars. The purchasers sluiced eighteen thousand dollars in dust and nuggets from the claims before winter arrived. Gregory quickly obtained

employment at two hundred dollars a day to locate claims for other prospectors who had faith in his ability to find gold.

The new district was difficult to reach. The trail to it was impassable for a wagon, and men could remain only as long as the provisions which they had to carry in on their backs lasted. But the gold was there, and by the time the Tabor party reached Denver there was no longer any doubt but that a rich camp had been discovered.

Anxious as they were to reach the new diggings, the Tabor party was compelled to remain in Denver until some time in July, when their foot-sore cattle were again able to travel. Here they also had to trade one of their cows for a supply of flour and smoked meats. With the oxen in fair condition, they started for the Gregory diggings. Near the present town of Golden they learned from a returning prospector the exact location of the new camp, but were warned that it could be reached only on foot, that not even a pack-horse could be taken over the trail.

Confronted with this obstacle, they made a camp in a grove near Clear Creek, and Tabor and Kellogg with a supply of provisions on their backs, together with a pick and shovel and a blanket each, started for the new camp on foot. They did not return for three weeks. Mrs. Tabor said they were three lonely, weary weeks. Surrounded by a wilderness of mountains, and with the horrors of the trip across the Plains fresh in her mind, she now had time to think of the peace, comfort, and security of her girlhood home in Maine. Compared with what the future now seemed to offer, the log cabin on Deep Creek was a palace, and the many rattlesnakes

and Indians only petty annoyances. While she had recently passed through many great perils, she now realized that there were much greater dangers ahead. But she was a true pioneer, and since that first morning at Deep Creek, her courage never again faltered, or if it did she did not betray the fact.

When Tabor and Kellogg returned, the latter was not enthusiastic over the idea of taking a wagon through Clear Creek Cañon and into Russell Gulch. Tabor, with his usual optimism, believed it could be done, so on July 26th they left the camp at Golden and started on the most difficult journey they had yet attempted.

Today it is but a short drive from Golden to Idaho Springs over an excellent highway. The Tabor wagon was the first to traverse Clear Creek Cañon and enter Russell Gulch, and Mrs. Tabor was the first white woman to arrive in the district. It took them three weeks to cover what is now an automobile ride of less than two hours. The road was then only a foot trail. Every few feet they were compelled to stop and widen it. Many times they were obliged to unload the wagon and carry its contents up the long, steep hills, and then return and with the block-and-tackle help the oxen draw the empty wagon to the top of the grade. When going downhill, frequently it was necessary to fell a pine, tree and fasten it to the wagon to act as a brake.

Darkness often overtook them where it was impossible to find a level place to spread a blanket. They solved the problem by driving stakes into the ground, rolling a log against the stakes, and sleeping with their feet against the log. Mrs. Tabor said there were times when the hill was so steep that they slept almost upright.

Felix Gandy, who passed over this route about a

week after the Tabor party had blazed the way, nearly seventy years later could distinctly recall what an awful road it was. He said he marveled that an ox-team and a loaded wagon could have surmounted the grades. The marks of the snubbing rope were then fresh on the trees where the Tabor party had eased the wagon down the sharp descents. There were other marks on other trees showing where the block-and-tackle had been used on the steep upgrades.

When the Tabor party finally succeeded in cutting their way through Clear Creek Cañon and Russell Gulch, and the large, heavily loaded wagon rolled slowly into Payne's Bar, a few miles south of Black Hawk, it was a day of public rejoicing. The miners knew, and appreciated, what a tremendous task the Tabor party had accomplished. The cow was an object of great curiosity, second only to Mrs. Tabor herself. "Think of it! A woman in the camp! And a young and good-looking woman! Well, I'll be dad-busted! Never thought we'd see a woman in this wilderness. And look! I swan if that aint a cook-stove." These, and other expressions, greeted the Tabors as the miners crowded close around the wagon. But the excitement reached a climax when little Maxcy Tabor was lifted out of the wagon and stared in round-eyed surprise and curiosity at the group of bearded men in red shirts and high boots. Maxcy was then about twenty months old and had inherited from his father a pleasant and winning smile that immediately captured his audience. They were just a gathering of ordinary men of perhaps more than average courage and initiative. Their surroundings, the desperate conditions they had to face, made them ruthless toward one another, but not toward a smiling little boy who

trustingly held up his hands to the nearest miner with a mute appeal to be taken up on his broad shoulder.

The miners of Payne's Bar had reason to rejoice over the arrival of the Tabor party. If one wagon could get through, then other wagons could, which meant that the camp was no longer isolated from the world. Their joy was increased when they learned that the wagon was loaded with provisions. This joy was heightened when a few days later Mrs. Tabor opened her restaurant and began to serve them food such as many had not eaten for years. Any amount, in the easily acquired gold dust, they considered not too much to pay for such meals.

Mrs. Tabor played a man's part in the terrific struggle to reach Payne's Bar, and after they arrived she was still the driving force of the expedition. Under her instructions, the men cut logs and laid them up four feet high, and over this enclosure erected the seven-by-nine tent for a roof.

Next, she sent Tabor and Kellogg on a prospecting trip. Kellogg was an experienced placer miner, having spent several years in the California diggings. The other man, Maxcy, was sick with mountain fever, and for four weeks he lay in the wagon-bed, close to the door of the tent, too sick to rise. Mrs. Tabor was his only physician and nurse.

Mrs. Tabor was a skilled and tireless worker. She had the sick man to attend to, her little boy to look after, the oxen and cow to feed and water. But that was not enough. Since she was an expert cook, she opened in the little tent what she called a bakery, baking bread and pies to sell, serving meals to the miners, and also selling milk and butter. She also acted as physician for the

entire camp, using what surgical knowledge she possessed, coupled with remarkable common sense, to treat gunshot and knife wounds. Not all of the many shooting and stabbing affairs in this wild camp of wild men had a fatal result. The miners buried their dead, but it fell to Mrs. Tabor to treat those who were only wounded.

At this point perhaps some mention should be made of the murders and other crimes committed at Payne's Bar and vicinity in the summer of '59. No authentic records are at hand; it is doubtful if they exist. Sixty-seven years later, shortly before he died, Felix Gandy recalled that most of the murders, or attempted murders, at Payne's Bar that summer were caused by claim-jumping. The miners were a poverty-stricken lot. Few had those outward signs of wealth—horses, revolvers, rifles. Nearly all, however, had bowie-knives, axes, picks—deadly weapons at close quarters. Lacking these, everywhere, and close at hand, were the weapons of neolithic man—rocks of all shapes and sizes. Gandy described at length a Homeric battle he witnessed between two groups of claimants for the possession of a small but rich placer. It was fought at a range of about thirty feet, and victory was achieved by the faction that had as one of its members a predecessor of the modern baseball pitcher. A gigantic, red-headed Irishman, with a long red beard, he had a wonderful south-paw throwing arm. Nearly every stone he hurled, and they were big ones, found its mark. Fortunately, no one was killed, but there were many broken ribs, fractured skulls and limbs, and bad bruises. It is safe to say that so far as crime was concerned, conditions at Payne's Bar that summer were much the same as they were in Denver, less than forty miles away. Unlike Payne's Bar,

the early crime records of Denver are still in existence. The first issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* appeared on April 23, 1859. From its aged files can be gleaned such interesting items as the following:

Marcus Gredler and Jacob Roder were working a mining claim in Bear Creek Canon, about twenty miles southwest of Denver. Gredler became irritated over some trifling matter—perhaps the flapjacks were burned or the coffee was not served piping hot—so with an axe he cut off the head of Roder. This was on June 12th. Gredler was captured on the 13th. Two days later, after a trial by the citizens of Denver, who assembled in a mass meeting for that purpose, he was properly and decently hanged from a scaffold erected for that purpose on Center Street close to Cherry Creek. This happened to be the day the Tabor party arrived in Denver. It was a fitting introduction to the town and gave them some conception of the conditions they were to be confronted with for many years. There was no difficulty in securing ringside seats for the performance. The town was so small, and the scaffold in such a commanding position, that no matter where one stood, the execution could be easily seen. Most likely the men in the Tabor party were among those grouped close to the foot of the scaffold, but let us hope Mrs. Tabor had more important things to do. The hanging meant nothing to her. It was just one more horror to live through, as she had lived through countless other horrors ever since she had left Maine three years before. She was afterward to come in close contact with many other things equally repulsive to a refined and educated woman, and to find a way to face them with calmness and courage.

There were reformers in Denver that summer. On July 20th James A. Gordon suddenly found that he disliked very much the occupation of a young business man, Frank O'Neill, who had recently established a quite elaborate house of ill fame on Arapahoe Street. Gordon's aim was bad and, while severely wounded, O'Neill recovered. Gordon, who happened to be in the same business as O'Neill, next shot twice at another competitor known as Big Phil. Again his aim was bad, for Phil was not even wounded.

It may be well to explain here that in the early days in Denver the industry here referred to was in the hands of men. Not until many years later did it come under the partial control of such well-known characters as Jennie Rogers, Mattie Silks, and other women equally notorious.

If contemporary records are correct, if the dim recollections of very old men are to be believed, the early Colorado dive-keepers were a most vile but enterprising lot. Like the modern racketeer, they would stoop to anything to gain a dollar. At that time white women were not available for their purposes, so they searched the Spanish settlements in New Mexico for Mexican girls of easy virtue who could be bribed with a string of red beads or a calico dress of gaudy colors. The Indian camps were also invaded, where squaws were bought and sold like horses, and where a young squaw could be purchased for a gallon of whiskey or less, or obtained for a condemned army musket and a supply of ammunition.

The end of Gordon was that of most of his kind. If he had sobered up after his two attempts to commit murder, or even if he had slain his two rivals, the affair would have been forgotten in a few days. But Gordon



still thirsted for blood. In a saloon where he paused for liquid courage he found an unarmed young German, John Gantz. This time Gordon did not miss, but killed his victim at the first shot.

The slaying of young Gantz aroused considerable indignation. Not even Gordon's friends attempted to defend him. At an impromptu meeting of a number of the inhabitants it was decided that Gordon should ornament one of the cottonwood trees on the main street of the town. Gordon sensed the unfriendly attitude of his fellow townsmen and fled to Fort Lupton, about thirty miles down the Platte. The next day, thanks to a fleet horse, he escaped the posse sent to capture him. Later it was learned he was in the Indian Territory. W. H. Middaugh, a man of great courage and remarkable public spirit, volunteered to bring him back, and eventually captured him in Coffee County, Kansas, on September 28th. Middaugh travelled over three thousand miles on horseback on this errand and, when he returned, he was thanked for his labors and reimbursed for the expenses he had incurred. On October 16th he had the further and signal honor of springing the trap when Gordon was hanged on the east bank of Cherry Creek near the present location of the Arapahoe Street bridge. At Julesburg, three years later, Middaugh was killed by someone unknown, but most likely a friend of Gordon's.

Scores of incidents such as those just mentioned could be cited as proof that Colorado in those days was no place for a weakling.

But let us return to Mrs. Tabor and her bakery. It was a success from the start. Heretofore, when his provisions were exhausted a miner had to return to

Denver for another supply, and pack them on his back for forty miles over a steep and narrow trail. This meant not only terrific labor, but also a week or ten days' elapse while nothing could be earned. Worse still, while he was away after food most likely some other man would be industriously looting his claim, laboring at the sluice-box from daybreak to dusk. There was then no law except the bowie-knife every man carried in his boot, or the heavy cap-and-ball revolver that frequently hung at his hip.

The Black Hawk district grew rapidly. Gold-hunters poured in by the thousands. The surface dirt on the Gregory lode was very rich and large amounts of gold were sluiced from it. As the miners dug down they encountered seams and pockets of rich ore which they crushed in rude arastras, recovering much of the gold by the sluice-box method.

In nearly all the streams and gulches around Payne's Bar and Black Hawk there were also rich placers that yielded up their wealth to the bearded, red-shirted toilers.

Instead of the small camp of Payne's Bar, the settlement became the town of Idaho Springs. A short distance away two other towns, Black Hawk and Central City, came into being. Up another gulch there was soon a third town, Nevadaville. The total population of the district in the fall of '59 was about fifteen thousand.

While the Tabor bakery prospered that summer, this was not true of the men in the Tabor party. Maxcy, the sick man, thanks to the intelligent nursing of Mrs. Tabor, eventually recovered, but it was late in the season before he was strong enough to do any work. Tabor secured a good claim, but winter arrived before it

began to show returns. There is no record as to what was accomplished by Kellogg, the third man of the Tabor party, but evidently he did not meet with much success.

Felix Gandy was a young Iowa farm boy and knew nothing of mining. Flat broke, with not enough money to buy a pick and shovel, the new boots cut to pieces with sharp stones, he carried water, chopped wood, milked the cow, and washed dishes for Mrs. Tabor in return for his meals. He also secured a job in a livery stable, which carried with it the privilege of sleeping with the horses and mules in the log stable. His employer was from Georgia, carried two revolvers, and was "quick on the draw." Because Gandy worked for him, he was rated as a negro slave and treated as such. Gandy was promised a few dollars of wages every month, but the money was never paid. A boy of seventeen, without a friend in the camp, of a mild disposition, with only a bowie-knife for a weapon, he had small chance of collecting by force the wages due him. Late that fall he had the opportunity of driving a mule team to the Missouri River in return for his meals and transportation. Thus ended his adventures in the Rocky Mountains. But in Des Moines, Iowa, in the summer of 1926, he related with gusto that in 1864, while in Georgia as sergeant of Company C, Fourth Iowa Infantry, he had the pleasure of helping to loot and burn the plantation of a man whose name was the same as that of the man he had worked for in Idaho Springs five years before.

Winter comes early in the high Rockies, and with the first snowstorm an old miner from California advised the Tabors to return to Denver, since, he assured them, the snow-slides were sure to wipe out the camp before

spring. Ignorant of conditions in the mountains during the winter, they took his advice.

Mrs. Tabor's bakery had been a profitable enterprise, and the Tabors arrived in Denver with a heavy sack of gold dust—enough to pay for the Kansas farm and, they hoped, to support them through the winter. They had planned to return to Payne's Bar in the spring. Mrs. Tabor intended to reopen her bakery, and Tabor was quite sure that with a little more labor he would uncover a rich body of ore in the claim he had worked nearly all summer.

Immediately after they arrived in Denver they rented a room over a store and Mrs. Tabor, as industrious as ever, started to serve meals and soon had a number of regular boarders.

Meanwhile Tabor learned from other men, who had spent previous winters in the California mountains, that there was no danger of snow-slides destroying Payne's Bar. He returned to the camp and, much to his surprise, found that his precious mining claim, on which he had built such high hopes, had been "jumped" by the foxy old man who had told him the fairy story about the snow-slides.

Unfortunately, the "Tabor luck," in the form of Mrs. Tabor, was not at hand. She was not at his elbow to tell him what to do, and urge him on to do it. What he should have done was to have taken a shotgun and early the next morning, from behind a convenient pile of rocks, filled the old Munchausen full of buckshot while he was busy looting the claim of the rich ore it contained. While it would have been taking a long chance, possibly Tabor would have been able to convince the vigilance committee that he shot in self-defense. Instead

Tabor abandoned his claim without a struggle and walked back to Denver with empty pockets.

This incident was typical of how Tabor, when left to his own devices, conducted himself. Optimistic, careless, generous, easy-going, he gave no thought to the future. Mrs. Tabor was free from these faults. She was furious when she learned what Tabor had done, or rather what he had not done. No longer was she the nervous, frightened young girl who wept so long and bitterly at the sight of the cabin on Deep Creek. Three years of frontier life, with its hardships and dangers, had given her a body as strong and resilient as tempered steel, and, it must be admitted, a tongue that could sting like a whip-lash. No longer was she a weak, shy girl; instead she was a self-reliant woman who knew her rights and would fight for them to the last ditch. She was disgusted with Tabor and vowed that never again would they be tricked out of a fortune for the lack of a good shotgun and a steady hand on the trigger.

Stung by his failure at Payne's Bar, that fall Tabor made another effort to gain a fortune. Leaving Mrs. Tabor in Denver, he traveled south about eighty miles to a spot near the present location of Colorado Springs. Here he thought would be a good place to start a town, and also an ideal location for the capital of the Territory. He built a log cabin and returned to Denver to endeavor to interest others in founding a town on the site he had selected. He was not successful. All the men he approached were desirous only of securing a heavy sack of gold dust and returning to the East.

## CHAPTER IX

### CALIFORNIA GULCH

WHEN the news of Gregory's rich strike reached Denver and the outside world there was a stampede to the new diggings. Emigrants from the East, who were now arriving in Colorado by the thousands, paused in Denver only long enough to rest their weary animals and then pushed on toward the new camp where, they were quite sure, they would all gain fortunes.

There were other gold discoveries in Colorado that summer, and there were other stampedes, the result being that nearly all the accessible and desirable ground was soon preëmpted. As a consequence, the latecomers were compelled to plunge deeper into the wilderness, but as they advanced toward the west they were confronted by a steep and impassable range of high mountains. Discouraged by these barriers, and the lack of any indication of gold, some of the prospecting parties turned to the south, and in July of '59 one small group of men succeeded in crossing the Rampart Range near Mount Rosalia and for the first time beheld the radiant and beautiful South Park in all its summer glory. On one of the small streams in the Park they discovered a rich placer. Since there seemed to be more than enough ground for all the party, and all decided to locate on the stream, they gave it the appropriate name of Tarryall Creek. The Tarryall discovery resulted in a stampede to that district.

In those days each mining district made its own mining laws. Usually, a placer claim was one hundred feet along the stream and fifty feet wide. The discoverer, however, was allowed two claims of these dimensions. At Tarryall Creek it was decided that the claims should be one hundred and fifty feet long. The late arrivals, who found all the best ground taken, protested strongly against this liberal allowance. Their objections aroused but slight interest, and they were more or less profanely informed that if they did not like the law they were welcome to go elsewhere. They did. West across the Park, and near the headwaters of the South Platte, they established a new mining district, and as a sly dig at Tarryall selfishness, they gave to the new camp the name of Fairplay. Here, it was unanimously agreed, the proper length of a placer claim was one hundred feet.

West of Fairplay, which is about ten thousand feet elevation, is a row of high, rugged peaks, now known as the Park Range. A few of the stronger and more intrepid gold-seekers, either unable to obtain good claims, or not satisfied with the yields from the Platte or Tarryall placers, or perhaps in search of that will-o'-the-wisp, the "mother lode," late in the fall of '59 found a way across the Park Range, most likely over the high gap now known as Mosquito Pass. In the labyrinth of small streams that here flow into the Arkansas they began to wash for gold. Lack of food and the early approach of winter compelled them to return before they had explored the country to any great extent.

How many took part and how many perished in this wild adventure will never be known, but in the winter a few of the gaunt and frost-bitten survivors arrived in Denver. Some of these men reported that they

had found gold in paying quantities, but were not very enthusiastic about returning to the district. One man was of the opinion that as soon as spring arrived he would return to his farm in Missouri, having had all the searching for gold he desired, and that hereafter he would be content to live in a land where he did not have to carry all his food on his back, and travel up and down almost perpendicular mountains for the sake of a few ounces of gold dust.

The survivors were uncertain as to the exact location of the new placers. All they knew was that they were in a tumbled mass of high peaks across a steep range of mountains to the west of South Park. They assumed, and their assumption was correct, that the many small streams, fed by the perpetual snows on the peaks, eventually found their way to a stream flowing to the southeast. The only stream fitting that description was the Arkansas.

Tabor was much interested in the stories told by these adventurers. Their tongues loosened by liquor, they dwelt on the hardships they had encountered, the wildness of the rugged country they had passed through, their expedients to avoid freezing and starvation, their narrow escapes from the warlike Ute Indians and the grizzly bears—and then the inevitable sack of gold-dust was thumped down on the bar, with the command, "Fill 'em up agen, bartender!" It was the same story, trimmed a trifle different, that Tabor had listened to at Deep Creek but nine months before. It fell on eager ears. As his later career was to illustrate, Tabor was like those mythical personages of Doctor Johnson's, "who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, who expect



that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow."

Tabor was easily convinced that in this vicinity was to be found the pot of gold he was seeking. It was not difficult to convince Kellogg and Maxcy that their pots of the precious metal were also awaiting them on the Arkansas.

Mrs. Tabor required no persuasion. The money that with so much toil she had gained the previous summer Tabor was now dribbling away in the saloons and gambling houses of Denver. She no longer had any fear of the wilderness, of Indians, of wild animals, of rattlesnakes, of storms, of cold, of starvation. What she did fear—perhaps "hated" is the better term—was the liquor, the saloons, the gamblers, the bleached and painted women of Denver. She was more anxious than the men in the party to escape from the dirty, filthy little town with its nightly toll of murder, robbery, drunkenness, and debauchery.

The experience of the previous summer had demonstrated to Mrs. Tabor that hunting for gold was a very uncertain occupation, but that a bakery in a new and prosperous mining camp was a sure and profitable enterprise. Therefore, their plans had this object in view. They still had their oxen, wagon, and camping outfit, but they had to sell their remaining cow to obtain supplies for the new expedition.

Returning prospectors had told them that it was impossible to take a wagon into South Park by the Mount Rosalia route. The valley of the Arkansas was also impassable because that stream flowed for miles through a crack a half-mile deep that was so narrow a

man could not pass through it on foot. But just to the north of Pike's Peak, they found by consulting a copy of Frémont's map, was a foot-path over a high pass that led into South Park. They were told that if they could gain South Park it was likely that the worst of their troubles would be over, for it was believed that it was comparatively open country from there south to the Arkansas. They would then be above the deep cañon of the river and it would be possible to cut a way through to the headwaters of the stream.

The experience at Black Hawk and Idaho Springs had taught the Tabor party the necessity of being early on the ground if they wished to secure good claims in a new district. Therefore, it was in the depth of winter, February 19, 1860, to be exact, that they yoked their oxen, loaded the wagon with the camp outfit and what supplies they could afford to purchase, and started on a journey that no experienced or cautious person would have attempted. Tabor was now trusting more and more to his lucky star, and all around him soon began to share his optimistic hopes as to what they were going to find on the Arkansas.

Living in Denver had not agreed with Mrs. Tabor. When they started she was so sick that she had to be lifted into the wagon. But once more on the trail, buoyed up by the hope of reaping a fortune during the coming summer, and living and sleeping in the open air, she quickly recovered her health. Within a few days, when they arrived at where Manitou is now located, she was again as energetic as ever. Here they camped for about a week, and Mrs. Tabor recalled that while there she used water from one of the mineral springs to make

biscuits, but so strong was the flavor of the soda that no one could eat them.

While they were camped at Manitou the three men prospected the near-by streams and also investigated the possibility of taking a heavily loaded wagon over Ute Pass and into South Park. They decided it could be done, so early in March they embarked on another almost superhuman task. A trail already existed, one that had been traveled by Ute and other Indians for centuries, but it was only a path over which men or horses could pass in single file.

That the Tabor party was able to surmount all the obstacles and gain the summit of Ute Pass in less than three weeks is evidence that they were now expert road-builders. Considering the magnitude of the task, it would have been remarkable if they had accomplished it in three months. With pick and shovel, axe and crow-bar, block-and-tackle and the labors of the oxen, foot by foot and yard by yard, they forced the wagon and its load up the steep and winding grade. The advance was at a snail's pace. Mrs. Tabor said that every night they could look back and see, far below, the smoke from their campfire of the previous evening.

Eventually they reached the crest where, fortunately, but little snow remained, and soon they had their first view of a rich and virgin land. To anyone who sees it for the first time on a spring morning, South Park seems an earthly paradise. Such also it must have appeared to the Tabor party, who viewed it in all its pristine loveliness. Mrs. Tabor recalled that to her eyes, weary of gazing on sun-baked desert, snow-covered hills, and huge rocks piled a mile or so high by some gigantic hand, the Park looked like an immense culti-

vated field, with crystal rivulets coursing through, and herds of deer and antelope grazing in the distance.

The first night in the Park they camped on one of the numerous streams, and after a supper of mountain trout caught close by, which Mrs. Tabor broiled over hardwood coals, they spent the evening playing whist by the light of the roaring campfire. Here was a most delightful place to spend the summer, or at least to pause for a short while, but the beauties of nature had no attraction for these fortune-hunters. The lure of gold hurried them on. A perfunctory panning of the stream showed no traces of the yellow metal, so they resumed their march.

A few days later they arrived, late at night, at a stream so salty that no one could drink the water, nor could they allow the oxen to quench their thirst. It was necessary to tie the cattle to the wagon, and all went supperless to bed. The night happened to be very cold, and a burro that had been lost by some prospector came to the camp and stood in the hot embers of the campfire until his fetlocks were burned off. Lonely for human companionship, the burro remained with the party and carried Mrs. Tabor on his back for many miles during the remainder of the trip.

The next day they were fortunate enough to discover a stream of fresh water, now called Trout Creek, where they camped for a few days to rest the oxen. Early one morning the men took their rifles, leaving Mrs. Tabor to guard the camp with a shotgun, and started out, each in a different direction, to locate the trail of a party of prospectors who were thought to be in the vicinity. These men had left Denver shortly before the departure of the Tabor party and their destina-

tion was the upper reaches of the Arkansas. That morning, before they started, the men agreed that the one who found the trail was to fire his gun as a signal to the others. All day long Mrs. Tabor listened for the signal, but not a sound broke the stillness. All her straining ears could hear was the chatter of the birds, the gurgling of the brook, and the murmur of the breeze through the tall grass. As the sun dropped behind a high peak to the west, darkness came on quickly and without any afterglow. Mrs. Tabor now had reason to be worried, and as the evening shadows gathered the little donkey sensed her distress and forced his way into the tent. Mrs. Tabor later confessed that she was now completely overcome and, bowing her head on that of the donkey, gave way to tears.

Regardless of how much she was troubled, Mrs. Tabor never lost her head, or failed to do the right thing at the right time. Surmising that the men were lost, she gathered wood and kept a huge campfire<sup>1</sup> blazing. Late that night, guided by this beacon, the tired and hungry wanderers returned, to be joyfully welcomed and find ready a meal Mrs. Tabor knew so well how to prepare.

The optimistic Tabor now had to acknowledge that they were lost. Since leaving Denver they had encountered but few white persons and some Indians whose sign language they did not understand. Nor since they had left the mineral springs at Manitou had they encountered any sign that a white man had ever been in this territory. They assumed that somewhere to the north, northeast, or northwest, was the Tarryall camp, but how far away, or in what direction, they could not even guess. As to where was the Arkansas, they had not the slightest idea. According to their calculations, they

should now be on its east bank, but the contour of the land, and other indications, gave no indication that they were approaching a large stream. Tabor agreed that the land should be sloping to the south, and the streams should be running in that direction. Instead, they flowed to the north, and by climbing a tall tree, Tabor could discern to the south a line of low, rolling hills. They were in a great natural amphitheatre covering nearly five hundred square miles. In every direction, except to the south, the mountains loomed high and forbidding.

Chance, fate, luck, or whatever one may call it, now took command of the party. They decided to travel in the direction a stick fell when placed upright. This happened to be to the southwest. That point of the compass now became their route, and climbing over what is now Trout Creek Pass, a few days later they arrived at a stream of considerable size, which they judged to be the Arkansas. Advancing up its east bank, they encountered very rough ground. It was thought that better time could be made if they crossed to the opposite side.

Choosing what seemed to be a good fording place, they made the attempt. The oxen, tired and weak, were benumbed by the icy water and stopped in the middle of the stream. The men immediately plunged into the swift current, which was up to their waists and, tying ropes to the horns of the oxen, endeavored to drag them over. The cattle refused to budge. Urged on by Mrs. Tabor, who always knew what to do in an emergency, they unyoked the oxen and led them across. The wagon was now partly unloaded, the men carrying its contents across the river on their backs. They were now soaked from

head to foot and chilled to the bone, but they were all young and powerful men of great endurance, so they did not cease their efforts. The heavy block-and-tackle was brought forth and one end fastened to the front axle of the wagon and the other to a convenient tree. The three men now put forth every ounce of strength they possessed and slowly snaked the wagon across the stream and up the low bank. The little donkey, with Mrs. Tabor clinging to his back, now pushed into the stream and swam bravely across the torrent.

For over six hours the men had toiled in freezing water up to their waists. As soon as Mrs. Tabor crossed over they built a large bonfire, by which they dried their clothes, and then ate with relish the meal she contrived.

Tired as they were, all remained awake that night. The oxen were in bad condition and it was feared they would die. Fires were kept burning to keep the oxen warm, while with their hunting knives the men searched for green tufts of grass to feed the animals.

The oxen were the last food resource of the party. Their provisions were now nearly all gone, and they knew that unless game was soon encountered they would be compelled to butcher the cattle and endeavor to return to Denver on foot. Mrs. Tabor shuddered when she thought of such a contingency, but blessed the day when the little donkey wandered into the camp. The burro could carry little Maxcy Tabor and a few blankets, and she could keep pace with the men, who would be loaded with their rifles and ammunition and what meat from the oxen they could pack on their backs.

Fortunately, they were not reduced to this last extremity. They remained at the crossing of the Arkansas for about a week. The oxen slowly recovered their

strength. The men were successful in their pursuit of game. Kellogg located and killed at the first shot a fat buck deer. A few days later Tabor brought in two young does. With the larder thus replenished, and the oxen in fair condition, they proceeded up the stream, stopping at intervals to pan for gold. The results were only mildly encouraging. Now and then the pan showed a few colors, but not enough to warrant locating a claim and building a sluice-box. It began to look as if their venture was to be a failure. Tabor, however, was not depressed. He pointed out that they had already found some gold, although the amount was very small, and it was only necessary to go farther up the stream to find the lode from whence it had been washed down. Obviously, it must be a very rich vein, as rich as the Gregory lode, and if they would but persist, they were sure to find it before the summer was over.

Within a few days there was to be a partial confirmation of Tabor's theory. Near the present town of Granite all their doubts vanished, for now every pan of gravel showed many colors, positive proof that they had discovered a rich placer. They made camp in a grove near the river. Quickly and eagerly, Tabor and the other men felled a tall, straight pine, whipsawed it into boards and built a long sluice-box, chopped riffles from a log, dug a ditch from the stream, and started to wash the gravel taken from the bedrock of the stream. To get at this gravel, and to raise the level of the water so that it would flow through the sluice-box, they built a dam part way across the river with logs and stones. All this preparatory work required a week or more of hard labor, and when they started to operate the sluice-box the results were a bitter disappointment. Day after day, for



nearly a month, they shoveled ton after ton of gravel into the sluice-box, but reaped only a few dollars' worth of metal. The gold was very fine and mixed with a heavy black sand. They had no quicksilver to place in the riffles, which would have separated the gold from the sand. The result was that the riffles soon became clogged with the sand, which also contained a small amount of flour gold. While the men labored at the sluice-box, Mrs. Tabor endeavored to pick out of the sand the minute flakes of gold. She was not very successful. At night she would have only a few pennyweights to show for her efforts during the day.

Discouragement once more gained the upper hand. Tabor's optimism, his jokes, his audible day-dreams of how they would spend the great wealth they would secure before the summer was over—all these could not lift the gloom. Mrs. Tabor had not heard from her parents for over a year. Little Maxcy was ailing. There was food for only a few days. No game could be found in the immediate vicinity. The return trip to Denver would be a terrible journey. Mrs. Tabor now began to doubt if she had the strength to again cross the mountains. Since they had only a vague idea where they were located, it seemed hopeless to attempt to find either the Fairplay or Tarryall camps.

But the Tabor luck did not desert them. One morning, while their spirits were at a low ebb indeed, a prospector hailed them from the opposite side of the river. He was hunting for a deer, or any other game he could find, and had seen the smoke of their campfire from the shoulder of a high mountain the evening before, when he was ten miles or more farther up the river. It was then too late to reach the camp before dark, but at

daybreak, noting that smoke was again visible at the same point, he hurried down the stream, anxious to buy from someone at the camp a supply of ammunition for his rifle.

This man was one of the party of prospectors that had left Denver in advance of the Tabors. They had entered South Park over Mount Rosalia, stopped at the Tarryall camp for a few days, and then had traveled west to the Park Range. Because of the deep snows, they could not surmount this barrier, so they turned to the left, and it is likely that it was over Trout Creek Pass that they crossed to the Arkansas, reaching that stream about twenty miles below where the Tabors were now camped. It was the crossing of the Park Range that caused eight of the party to refuse to advance farther into an unknown wilderness where there was no assurance of gold, but where it did seem that death by cold or starvation was a certainty. The two men who crossed over were more courageous. They had but little food. The nights were bitter cold. The climb up the pass was steep. Their packs were heavy. The snow at the summit was deep. But they pushed on, dreaming of the wealth they were going to scoop from the golden sands of the Arkansas.

While the Tabor party was much interested in what their visitor told them about the hardships he had encountered since leaving Denver, what excited them was his report that but a few miles up the stream gold had been found in paying quantities. He gave them explicit directions how to reach the camp, but warned them that the miners had but little food, and unless game was soon found they would all be in a desperate situation.

This man and his partner were not the discoverers of California Gulch. On March 19th, S. S. Slater, George Stevens, Isaac Rafferty, John Currier, and Abe Lee, who had been placer-mining near Black Hawk the previous summer, left Payne's Bar and started for the Arkansas. Like the Tabor party, they had heard the stories of gold discovered there the previous fall and were determined to secure their share. They were all strong, robust young men, well armed and well equipped, if what equipment they could carry on their backs would be thought sufficient for such an undertaking.

It was still winter in the high hills and there was much snow on the ground when they started south over the rough and broken country toward Bear Creek. They entered South Park over the north rim and proceeded south until they crossed the Platte not far from the present town of Garo. They now turned to the west, and it must have been by chance that they found a way through the deep snowdrifts and over the Park Range. They came to the Arkansas a short distance below the spot where the Tabor party was later endeavoring to separate flour gold from black sand without using quicksilver. This must have been about the time the Tabors crossed the river farther down the stream.

As they had been told that the gold-bearing streams were on the west side of the valley, the Black Hawk party crossed over and began to prospect the gulches in that vicinity. They traveled north as far as Colorado Gulch, afterward a famous placer camp. Few colors showed in their pans. Observing to the northwest a depression in the high range of mountains (Tennessee Pass), they decided that this must be the gulch they were seeking. Shouldering their packs, they again

started up the valley. Eventually they reached a flat stretch of ground, and noted that from the right a small stream flowed into the Arkansas. As was the habit of the placer-miner, they crossed over and panned some of the gravel from this creek. Every pan showed several colors.

The long, fast march with heavy packs over rough country and through deep snows had about exhausted the entire party. There was no disagreement when it was suggested that they go into camp for a few days while making a thorough investigation of the stream. The few pans of gravel they had already washed indicated that there was considerable gold in the stream and it was thought likely that if they would dig down to bedrock it would be found in paying quantities. The gulch was also a good place to make a camp. There was little snow on the ground, due to the heavy growth of timber, and there was plenty of dead dry wood for the large campfires it was necessary to keep burning all night if anyone was to sleep in a temperature that with the setting of the sun quickly dropped to the freezing point or below. The shortage of food was another reason why a halt was necessary. There was only enough to last for a few days longer. It was essential that someone search for the tracks of game and endeavor to stalk and shoot a deer or elk, or any animal that would furnish meat.

After spending a day or two in a futile search for game, they started up the gulch, stopping now and then to wash a pan of gravel. Only mildly encouraging were the results. They could easily dig through the top loam on the banks of the stream, but farther down they encountered a tough cement that their light picks could not penetrate. They had about decided to abandon their

search and return to the Arkansas, when one or two men who had advanced farther up the stream returned with the news that the gulch had already been prospected. The evidence was a hole someone had started to dig, but abandoned before reaching bedrock. It was surmised that the hole had been dug the previous season, the prospector giving it up as an impossible task because he could not, single-handed and without a pick, penetrate the tough stratum he had encountered.

The five men soon gathered close around the hole, and there was much speculation as to who it was that had thus left his trade-mark in this unexplored wilderness. Since the job was partly finished, someone suggested that it be completed. The hole was enlarged, and eventually, by much effort, they broke through the hard upper crust and reached the gravel lying on the bedrock. While the other men were resting from their efforts, Abe Lee filled his pan with the gravel and, dipping up some water from the stream, started to wash the contents of the pan. Soon a wild yell from Lee brought the other men to his side. "What have you got!" they asked. "I've got all of California right in this here pan!" was his reply.

Thus was California Gulch discovered, and thus did it gain its name.

Stripping off their coats, all the men now began to work at top speed. While some washed the gravel, Lee being especially expert at this task, others enlarged the hole and started to shovel out the gravel faster than it could be washed. They were amazed at its richness. Never before had they encountered such a find. Nearly every pan yielded an ounce or more of the yellow flakes. It was not flour gold—specks of microscopic size—but

coarse gold as large as kernels of wheat or corn, with an occasional nugget weighing an ounce or more.

It is not surprising that these hungry gold-seekers toiled on, without food or rest, until darkness brought an end to their labors. That night, gathered close around a big campfire, by the light of its flames they totaled up their winnings. It was a large sum, several hundred dollars per man, and confirmed their belief that they had found one of the richest placers ever known.

This discovery was made on April 5, 1860. There is as yet no monument to mark it, but the hole these men discovered that day was near the present town of Leadville, just below the old camp of Oro, and where the Rock mine crosses California Gulch. It is an historic spot and its location should be indicated by a suitable marker.

About the first of April the two survivors of the Denver prospecting party picked up and followed the trail of the Black Hawk men and joined them a day or two after the discovery. These men were both given discovery rights (claims two hundred feet up and down the stream) and the seven men proceeded to form a mining district, enact by-laws, and elect officers. All this occurred between the 8th and 12th of April. Within a few days the organization of the district was perfected by the election of Abe Lee as recorder, and the adoption of a set of laws or regulations to govern the camp.

A few days later three more gold-seekers arrived, but too late to share in the discovery rights. They had to be content with claims only one hundred feet long.

It was not long before all the provisions in the camp were exhausted. From time to time men were detailed

to hunt for deer, elk, bear, or any other game they could find. Either there was not much ammunition in the camp, or the men were poor shots, for the supply of gunpowder was soon gone. It was one of these hunters that encountered the Tabor party, and from whom he secured some ammunition.

As soon as they learned of the new discovery the Tabor party abandoned their ditch and sluice-box and started up the Arkansas. It was a difficult journey over rough ground, and when the treacherous stream had to be crossed again Mrs. Tabor and the baby had a narrow escape from death. The ford they selected seemed shallow, but close to the opposite bank was a deep channel. As the oxen plunged into it, the wagon-bed, in which were Mrs. Tabor and young Maxcy, floated above the wheels and started down the stream, and at the same time began to fill with water. Mrs. Tabor grasped some willows that projected over the bank, as the wagon-bed floated by, and held on with superhuman strength until the men came to her rescue.

The crossing of the Arkansas was just above the mouth of Iowa Creek, where the stream is wide and shallow. From there it was but a few miles to the gulch they were seeking. As the country was fairly open, they made good progress, but so heavy and dense was the timber and underbrush along California Gulch that it required two days to chop a passage through to the new camp, a distance of about five miles.

Three months after leaving Denver the Tabor party arrived at the new diggings, a journey that an automobile can now cover in a day. The boots of the men were worn out, their clothes were in rags, and all were as gaunt and hungry as wolves after a hard winter.

Their food was exhausted and they had left only a few ounces of gunpowder. Equally desperate was the plight of the other men in the camp. While they had washed out many pounds of gold dust, it was of no help in this extremity; gladly would they have traded it all for a single pound of gunpowder.

Only cruel necessity compelled them to do it, but now occurred the saddest tragedy Mrs. Tabor said she ever witnessed. The whole party of fifteen people were at the point of starvation, and they had left but a few charges of gunpowder. The latter was not of much use. The deer, elk, and other game had just started to return from their feeding grounds in South Park. What few there were in the vicinity were difficult to find, and more difficult to stalk. And no one in the party had the strength to trail an animal for miles with the hope of coming within shooting distance. There was but one thing left to do, if they were to avoid cannibalism, and that was to butcher at once the faithful old oxen that had brought the Tabor party from Kansas City to the farm near Fort Riley, then across the bare plains to Denver, over the terrible hills to Payne's Bar and back to Denver, and then had survived the strenuous journey, over the heart-breaking Ute Pass, to California Gulch. These two dumb beasts are the real heroes of this tale.

The day after the arrival of the Tabor party the three men started to erect a cabin of green pine logs that lacked floor, door, and windows. It was about twelve feet square, and the roof was of poles covered with bark and dirt. The openings between the logs were chinked with mud, and across the space that served as a door was hung a tarpaulin.



With the oxen converted into beef, and Mrs. Tabor said it was very tough beef, they had no further use for the wagon. The wagon-bed was used to build a table, a side-board, and some three-legged stools. The cook-stove was set up, and while all she had to serve them was poor beef and dried apples, Mrs. Tabor began to feed the miners, taking her pay in liberal amounts of gold-dust.

Mrs. Tabor realized that the beef from two oxen would not long feed thirteen hungry men. She suggested to Abe Lee that he call a meeting of everybody to discuss the situation. At this meeting, by unanimous consent, Lee was authorized to choose two of the strongest men, one to return to Denver on foot to purchase provisions, and the other to march south to the Mexican settlements in the San Luis valley and bring in a burro-train of flour. Mrs. Tabor cooked for each man enough beef to sustain him until the end of his journey, and both took with them a considerable amount of gold dust. They were successful. Within ten days a train of burros loaded with flour, and accompanied by several Mexicans, appeared in the camp. It was over two weeks before the other man returned, visits to the saloons and bawdy houses of Denver having first to be attended to before the wants of his companions, far away in the mountains, could be considered. He did not return alone. In addition to a large train of horses and mules loaded with salt meat, coffee, sugar, and other supplies, at his heels were several hundred eager gold-seekers, all determined to obtain their share of the gold which California Gulch seemed to reek.

THE LOOTING OF A TREASURE  
CHEST

WHEN the Tabors first viewed California Gulch it was a thickly wooded valley down which coursed a limpid, trout-filled stream fringed with willows and mountain flowers. Forty years later, when the writer first saw it, there was not a trace of its former beauty. For over seventy years it has been a barren waste. Other Colorado streams bear traces of the destructiveness of the placer-miner—wounds that Nature eventually heals. Here was not injury but annihilation. The early pioneers stripped off the top loam of the banks, tore out with their sharp picks and cast aside the layer of cement that guarded the treasure, dammed the stream so that the water would flow through their sluice-boxes, and then washed the millions of cubic yards of rich gravel the gulch contained.

It required but a few weeks to completely change the appearance of the lovely little valley. Strong arms and sharp axes soon cleared it of every tree. Lumber was in demand for cabins, for sluice-boxes, and for fuel. The gulch is nearly two miles above sea level, and even in mid-summer a cabin and not a tent, plenty of blankets, and a warm fire, are needed for comfort at night.

California Gulch was a rich discovery, and as soon as its richness was known there was a stampede from Denver, as well as from the various mining camps. By mid-summer over five thousand men were camped along

the stream, living under conditions that today would not be tolerated for animals. They laughed at their hardships, for here was gold a-plenty. Panning or sluicing brought enormous returns. Frequently a man could fill an oyster-can with dust or nuggets in a single day. Some of the claims yielded an average of a pound of gold a day per man. This gold was worth eighteen dollars' an ounce. It was not unusual for the owner of a single claim, with a few helpers, to wash out a thousand dollars' worth a day. One group of men, owning two claims in common, were reported to have taken out over one hundred thousand dollars in sixty days.

Among the early arrivals at California Gulch was a bright young Jew, Wolfe Londoner. Obviously, he did not enter the camp with a pick and shovel on his back, but came with a large wagon heavily loaded with flour and other provisions, including several barrels of whiskey. As soon as he learned of the strike he left Denver with his load of freight, accompanied by a helper, and arrived at his destination by the route over Ute Pass that the Tabors had hewed out with so much labor. Instead of a single yoke of oxen, his wagon was drawn by six young mules. Instead of the three months the Tabors had required, he rolled into California Gulch, cracking his whip atop his high wagon in less than three weeks. He had no trouble in disposing of his flour, which had cost him but a fraction of that amount, for a dollar a pound, and the smoked meats brought equally high prices. The whiskey, of course, brought almost its weight in gold dust. It was prime liquor, prematurely aged by its long journey across the Plains by ox-team, and could be diluted by an equal volume of water and still retain a kick.

In his reminiscences Londoner gives a vivid picture of California Gulch as it impressed his youthful eyes. He said the town stretched along the stream for about five miles. Tents and wagons lined the road. The wagons were backed up to the edge of the road, and many were used for what Londoner called hotels. Food and tin dishes were stacked under the wagons, to be brought forth at mealtime. The cooking was in rude stone fireplaces in the open air. The owner of the hotel usually slept under the wagon. In the wagon-bed, under its canvas top, slept as many men as could be packed in. Gamblers also had their little tables strung along the road, three-card monte being the most popular game. What was then termed a saloon was two whiskey barrels supporting a long board, and a few tin cups. The placer miner scorned a "chaser" with his liquor; what he wanted was straight whiskey and lots of it.

Save perhaps in greater degree, California Gulch had all the characteristics of other early Colorado mining camps. While there were the usual miners' laws, they were seldom enforced except when an unusually brutal murder was committed or a bold robbery was executed. There were no law-officers. The law was the heavy cap-and-ball revolver that nearly every man carried on his hip, or the perhaps more deadly bowie-knife with which many were armed.

Among the parasites, the John Oakhursts were well represented, but the majority of the gamblers were of the "tin-horn" variety. It was not long before the camp was also well equipped with dance-halls and their painted inmates, as well as a liberal supply of *filles de joie* and their male managers—and all were there to grab

what crumbs they could during this looting of one of Nature's richest treasure-chests.

Strong in the arm and thick in the head, the average placer-miner was a most optimistic person. What if the gambler, the liquor vender, the scarlet woman, robbed him of that for which he toiled all day in the burning sun, standing in icy muck up to his knees. The next morning he had a painful headache and a sickening taste in his mouth, but his arms and back were as strong as ever, and in the stream at his feet was enough of the yellow metal to pay for endless debauches. He had but to seize his shovel and bend his back to the task and by nightfall the buckskin bag that swung from his neck would be once more crammed with gold. To these men, life was simple and free from all complications, chiefly because they had neither material possessions nor women; nor did they desire the latter, except for the moment. They had no debts, no creditors, no regrets for the past, no hopes for the future. The present day, the present hour—with that only were they concerned. They labored, bolted their coarse food, squandered for liquor or women their gains, slept, and the next day went through the same dull round. They were a race apart, these placer-miners. Cast in the same mold as the early trappers who first explored the West, they scorned civilization and all that the word implies. Cohabiting at times with Indian squaws and Mexican girls, who were adepts in contributing to their comfort and pleasure, they had no use for women of their own breed. This was because few white women could endure the hardships the placer-miner accepted without question; none would long endure them if a remedy could not be found. But if these men held in contempt such things as wives,

children, homes, material things—they did not lack intelligence of a sort, initiative, tremendous endurance, and reckless courage. Without these qualities, they would never have broken new trails so quickly throughout the West for weaker men to follow.

The parasites of California Gulch, who fought and quarreled among themselves for the largess the miners scattered with a liberal hand, were typical of that period of American life, and the moral standards that then prevailed. These standards were low indeed, judged by what we now consider right and wrong.

Then the gambler was not a pariah, hounded by the police from pillar to post as he is today. No one questioned his character or his occupation, provided he played an honest game, as quite a number did. It was the "tin-horn," the crooked gambler, against whom every hand was turned. But so skilled and shrewd were these gentry, so well did they wear the habiliments of honesty, that only now and then was one shot or stabbed by an irate victim, or driven forth from the camp in disgrace.

Nor did the liquor-vender suffer from any moral stigma. On the contrary, his arrival was often hailed with cheers, so strong was the belief that liquor was necessary to one's happiness and pleasure. About the only criticism he was likely to encounter concerned the weakness of his fiery potions and the prices he charged. Occasionally, a joyful celebrant would insert a bowie-knife between a bartender's ribs, or puncture him with a pistol-ball, but such horseplay was frowned on by other patrons who desired to get drunk in peace. Actions of this kind were also dangerous. The bartender was seldom a weakling, and could shoot as quickly, or handle a

bowie-knife as skillfully, as any miner whose brain was befuddled with liquor.

The operators of the dance halls, and what then passed for theatres, with their crews of Mexican girls and other mixed-breed women, were perhaps a step lower down in the social scale. It was recognized, however, that the entertainment they offered was as essential as the liquor they also sold, as well as the games of chance they usually operated. A gifted man once wrote something to the effect that single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints. That hard-bitten crowd which ravished California Gulch in the early sixties was far from saintly and demanded, and was furnished, just the sort of entertainment it desired.

The scarlet woman—since Babylon, and before, men have always judged her more or less kindly. But in a mining camp, whose population was nearly all young unmarried men, these creatures arrogated to themselves rights and privileges never accorded to decent women. There were not then, nor in Colorado until many years later, enough women of Mrs. Tabor's kind to put them in their place. It was amid such surroundings that Mrs. Tabor was to live for many years. There never was any scandal attached to her name, but it is not surprising that, viewing at close range the shortcomings of so many men, she eventually became cynical as to any virtues possessed by the male sex, and was also quite sure that of most of the women she encountered the least said the better.

Not only was every foot of ground in California Gulch preëmpted shortly after the Lee discovery, but all the other gulches and streams in the Upper Arkansas Valley swarmed with eager gold-seekers before the

summer had far advanced. Evans, Temple, Iowa, Thompson, Empire, Half Moon, Colorado, Cash gulches—all these yielded more or less gold, but it is doubtful if the total of all these streams equalled the amount that was sluiced out of California Gulch. Colorado and Cash creeks were the most consistent producers. Twenty years later Cash Creek was still yielding thirty thousand dollars every summer. But richest of all, where the nuggets were as large as hen's eggs, was the mythical Lost Cañon, which was unwillingly abandoned by its discoverers because of a heavy snowstorm, and which never again was located. It was supposed to be to the west and south of the town of Granite.

Some of the horde of prospectors who reached California Gulch that summer spilled over into the wild and rough Blue River country, north and west of California Gulch. Near the present town of Breckenridge, and in Georgia, French, and Humbug gulches, they sluiced out about a million dollars' worth of the yellow metal in a few weeks.

Tabor arrived at California Gulch a few days too late to be entitled to a discovery claim two hundred feet long; he had to be satisfied with one about a hundred feet in length. The ancient record-book kept by Abe Lee describes it as "Number 12 above Discovery." Its approximate location can be easily found—a hundred feet or so above the mouth of Nugget Gulch, which enters California Gulch from the north. It is perhaps a quarter of a mile above the famous old Y E and Minnie bonanza that years later was to be the foundation of the great Guggenheim fortune.

In all, there were about three hundred claims in California Gulch. They were frequently sub-divided,



the claim-owner selling a half, quarter, eighth, or sixteenth of a claim. There may have been smaller subdivisions, but a sixteenth of a hundred feet is a small amount of ground to wash for gold, no matter how rich may be the gravel.

The entire gulch was soon one continuous street, with the stream in the middle, but most of the business structures were eventually located at two points. On the north bank, where the hills flatten out toward Leadville, was "Old Oro." Thirty years ago there were a few traces to mark the spot. These have long since disappeared. The other business and amusement section was nearly three miles up the stream, now called Oro, and it was here that Mrs. Tabor had her restaurant and bakery.

The chief shortcoming of California Gulch was the lack of water. It was used over and over again, until by the time it reached the claims at the lower end of the gulch it was almost liquid mud. It is possible that Tabor foresaw this would happen, hence his reason for choosing a plot above the Discovery claim. He erred, however, in selecting one that included a fall in the stream. This pocket-size Niagara was at the lower end of the Tabor claim. During the aeons that this placer was coming into existence the swift flow of the water immediately above the falls had washed nearly all of the gold into the claim below. The owner of this claim sluiced out over eighty thousand dollars' worth the first summer, mostly in nuggets. Tabor had to be satisfied with a very small amount of flour gold. As it was proven later, he selected one of the poorest claims in the gulch. Thus, once more, did the fickle jade pass him scornfully by.

Another shortcoming of this placer was the climate, which prevented it from being worked for more than a

short season. Due to the altitude, the average year is made up of about nine months of winter and three months late in the fall. Therefore, when heavy ice started to form in the stream, and the miners and their parasites began to depart for Denver, New Mexico, and the East, Mrs. Tabor decided that she was also entitled to a vacation. The Tabor bakery had prospered. Not all of the easily gained gold the miners had scooped from the stream had passed to the harpies. To more than one miner, Mrs. Tabor's well-cooked meals, or her famous pies, were more attractive than a tin cup of bad whiskey, or a whirl on a dance-hall floor with one of the hard-bitten old crones who termed herself a "dance-hall girl."

Mrs. Tabor was well known in the camp, and being honest and obliging, as well as respectable, by popular consent she was made postmistress of the gulch. She was also called on to weigh and appraise all the gold taken from the upper part of the stream, since she had the only gold-scales in that section.

The profits of the Tabors from the placer claim, the bakery, the gold-scales, the express service, and the post-office, amounted to about five thousand dollars at the end of the summer. With a thousand dollars in gold dust, on September 20th Mrs. Tabor, with her little boy, took passage with a mule train going to the Missouri River. This cost her nothing. Thrifty as ever, she worked as a cook to pay her passage. The train was five weeks crossing the Plains.

Using part of the money she brought with her, Mrs. Tabor stopped at Deep Creek and purchased a quarter section of land adjoining the Kansas homestead. She

then journeyed to Maine, where she spent the winter with her parents.

With her wardrobe renewed, on which she worked industriously for weeks, early in the spring of '61 she started on the long and dangerous return journey to California Gulch. She was accompanied by Tabor who, later in the fall, had returned to Maine. At St. Joe, Missouri, the end of the railroad, they purchased a team of mules and a wagon with the money they had left, and joining a band of other travelers, drove to California Gulch in a little over six weeks.

The remainder of the Tabor capital, about four thousand dollars, that winter was sent to Iowa to purchase flour and other supplies, and in the spring the cabin was enlarged and improved and the Tabors opened a grocery and general store in connection with the bakery and restaurant.

In April of that year Lincoln issued the first call for troops for the Civil War. The hatred that had been smoldering for years, that the warfare in Kansas had kept alive, that had almost burst into flames as a result of the bloody John Brown raid in Virginia and its savage punishment, could no longer be controlled. Immediately following Lincoln's election the cotton states seceded, and started the war by the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumpter on April 14th.

With no telegraph line or railroad west of the Missouri River, California Gulch was a long way from Washington. Doubtless it was several weeks before the declaration of war reached the more remote Colorado mining camps. Tabor was anxious to enlist. No one ever doubted his courage or his hatred of slavery. But it did not seem best. He was now thirty-one years old,

with a wife and child whom he had to support and protect, and all the money he possessed was tied up in a risky business venture. He very wisely let Mrs. Tabor persuade him that the younger, unmarried men should do the fighting. Tabor always regretted he did not serve in the Civil War and ever afterward treated in the most generous manner any Union soldier that applied to him for help.

The snow was still deep on the high hills and in the open ravines when the Tabors returned, but in the more or less sheltered gulch the stream was partly free of ice and the miners were busy washing the gravel, notwithstanding the water in which they worked was at the freezing point. No Simon Legree could force from slaves the terrible labor, nor make them undergo the hardships, voluntarily undertaken by the early placer-miners. Frequently they secured rich rewards, in a monetary sense, but in the majority of cases the hard-earned gold was quickly dissipated in the gambling houses, the saloons, and the bagnios.

There is no reliable data obtainable, but it has been estimated that over a million dollars in gold dust and nuggets was taken out of California Gulch the summer it was discovered. The next year this output was more than doubled. Production fell off considerably in 1862, and thereafter decreased rapidly, the yield in 1876 being less than twenty thousand dollars. It is believed that the total yield of California Gulch, up to that time, was about eight million dollars.

In addition to the postoffice, the Tabors also operated an express service to Denver. The first year William Van Brooklyn was employed. He had a pair of mules, which he rode alternately, and he received seventy-five

cents for each letter he carried, as well as an equally high rate for any express packages he delivered. It usually required two weeks to make the round trip, but later, when a road had been built, the time was reduced to eight days.

The express was frequently robbed of the gold-dust taken to Denver, the single messenger being no match for the bands of desperate men that patrolled the road. In the summer of '61 Tabor evolved an ingenious scheme to foil the robbers, and also increase his profits. He would buy at a discount what gold he could afford to purchase and put it in buckskin bags, which were then placed in two gunnysacks. These sacks were then placed on a horse, and over the sacks was spread a horse-blanket, and then a saddle was cinched over the blanket. Thus accoutered, Mrs. Tabor would ride the horse to Denver, accompanied by Tabor. If they were stopped by road-agents, chivalry enabled Mrs. Tabor to escape a search, and the gold was saved. Tabor was not so fortunate, the robbers always taking the small amount of gold he carried on his person.

Mrs. Tabor said these journeys taxed her strength to the utmost. Over the high passes the wind blew so fiercely that they had to travel on foot. And ascending to these ridges, the trail was so steep that they had to dismount and hang on to the tails of their horses.

Their camping outfit was simple—a small axe and a frying-pan. If darkness overtook them when not near a mining camp or cabin, the horse-blankets served for bedding, the axe enabled them to build a warm camp-fire, and in the frying-pan Mrs. Tabor cooked the evening meal. This was usually either salt pork or bacon or, more frequently, game that Tabor had shot

during the day, or trout he had caught in a near-by stream. Tabor was a deadly marksman with the long-range Sharps rifle he carried slung to his saddle-horn, and small game did not often escape his cap-and-ball revolver.

The summer of '61 was not a very prosperous one for the Tabors. The placer claim yielded so little that it was abandoned. By mid-summer many of the claims around the head of the gulch and near the Tabor store were worked out and their owners promptly migrated to other fields. This had its effect on the earnings of the postoffice and express service, as well as the grocery store. While the gulch produced more gold than it did the previous summer, by the end of the season much of the yield was confined to a few claims farther down the stream. The handwriting was plain on the wall. The treasure chest would soon be empty.

While others had taken many pots of gold out of California Gulch, Tabor now began to realize that there were none for him. At the cost of tremendous labor he had for the second time reached the foot of the rainbow, but fate decided that only a very modest part of the wealth scattered there was to be his portion. He was disappointed but not discouraged. That optimistic spirit which all his life never deserted him came to the fore. A few miles north and east of Oro, but on the other side of the Park Range, was a new camp that Tabor learned offered a promising location for a grocery store. It had the picturesque name of Buckskin Joe, that being also the sobriquet of Joseph Higginbotham. Here, in 1860, that prospector had discovered a rich outcropping of gold ore. The camp was located in a steep and narrow gulch that descended from Buckskin Mountain.

After a visit to the new camp, Tabor was convinced it had a great future, and he started to build a log cabin about thirty feet square. It was a substantial structure, with a floor, two windows, and a door. Late in September the roof was in place, and now Tabor hurried the moving of his possessions from California Gulch over Mosquito Pass before the road was choked with snow. The next few weeks was a struggle against the quick approach of winter. The cabin had to be chinked against sub-zero weather, which would last for months. And there was no limit to the quantity of firewood that had to be cut. Fortunately, there was a tremendous quantity close at hand, the virgin forest covering all the hills and ravines up to the timber line, which was about twelve thousand feet elevation.

With sufficient food to last until May or later, when the trails would again be open, with what then was considered a warm cabin, with a pile of firewood that increased in size every day, the Tabors were prepared for a siege that might last for eight months. Buckskin Joe, Laurette, Montgomery, and all the other camps in the vicinity were soon almost deserted, few of the miners having the fortitude to face the long winter that started in September and would not end until June. But Tabor was not disturbed. He knew that the miners would all be flocking back a few months hence; that higher up the gulch was some rich ground he would claim and which surely must be paved with dust and nuggets; that before another year slipped by he would have made his rich "strike" and would be able to do the many things he had longed to do since his boyhood days in Vermont.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SEVEN YEARS AT BUCKSKIN JOE

DOWN in the low country, in South Park, in Platte Cañon, at Denver, in the foothills and out on the plains, spring came and passed, and summer with its dust and choking heat was at hand. Not until then did the long, gloomy winter at Buckskin Joe come to an end. The heavy storms now degenerated into snow flurries. The piercing gales that for months had swept up and down the gulch now had a faint suggestion of warmth. The thermometer that hung outside the door of the Tabor cabin now dropped below zero only with the setting of the sun; all during the day it stood well above the freezing point. Slowly at first, and then swiftly as the days lengthened, the blazing sun and the dry winds ate into the snowbanks that blocked the high passes. Rivulets became torrents, and the tiny stream by the Tabor cabin, in the narrow, dark, thickly wooded gulch, suddenly freed itself of its icy fetters, to become overnight a small river and fret and boil over and through the boulders that choked its course.

On foot and on horseback, by ox-team and by mule-team, the miners returned to Buckskin Joe, all eager to dig out a fortune during the few weeks the stream was free from ice. Their takings ranged from day wages to small fortunes, the rich rewards being confined to not more than a score of lucky individuals. But all liberally



patronized the Tabor store and bakery. Mrs. Tabor was busy from early morning until late at night, and the profits rolled in steadily at a volume greater than the previous summer at California Gulch.

Tabor's luck did not materialize. As the summer advanced, his optimistic hopes receded. All the placer claims he staked out, and on which he toiled every hour of daylight, failed to yield returns worth the labor. Other claims he purchased proved to be equally valueless. Before cold weather arrived he abandoned the struggle and reverted to his skill as a poker-player to recoup some of his losses. Here he was more successful. There were then few professional gamblers in Colorado more skilled than Tabor at this game of chance.

The summer of 1862 was the most prosperous of the seven years the Tabors spent at Buckskin Joe. Later all the placer claims along the gulch, as well as other gulches in the vicinity, were stripped of their riches. Fortunately the exhaustion of the placers was offset to a considerable extent by the discovery of several profitable lode mines. One of the best known was the Phillips, located in 1862, and which produced three hundred thousand dollars' worth of ore. The Orphan Boy also yielded considerable profit, its production being about equal to the Phillips. Stamp mills were erected to handle the ore from these mines, which helped to keep the camp in existence, and yielded a small profit to the Tabor store. Eventually, the decomposed ore at the top of the veins was exhausted and then the miners encountered the solid iron and copper pyrites. While these carried considerable quantities of the yellow metal, the crude mills of that day could not recover the gold. The early Colorado miners knew little or nothing about the

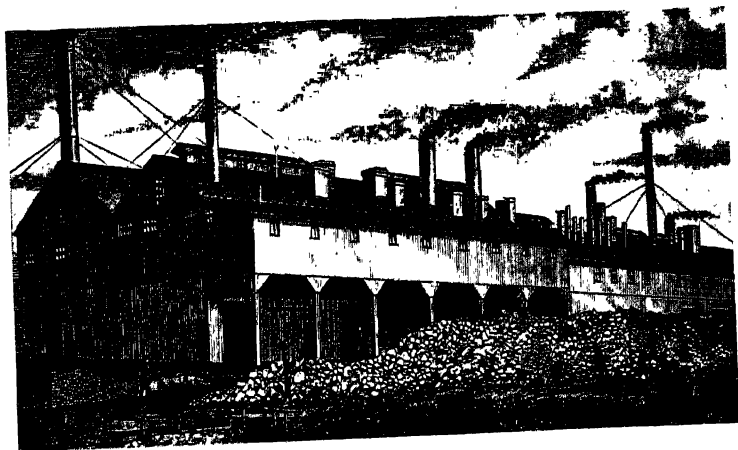
smelting of gold ores, nor did they have the materials necessary to build smelting furnaces.

During several of the years at Buckskin Joe the Tabors barely escaped starvation. It was an isolated camp and supplies could only be brought in during about three months of the year. The nearest railroad was at the Missouri River, over seven hundred miles away, and all supplies, as well as much of the food, had to be taken across the plains in wagons against the opposition of the Indians, who by 1864 were organized into large bands and for years carried on a bitter warfare. For eight or nine months of the year the camp was completely shut off from the outside world. It was a lonesome, cheerless place, and it left its mark on Mrs. Tabor. She was no longer a young girl, bubbling over with the mere joy of living. Hardships, exposure, worry and constant toil had aged her before her time. But she was as energetic as ever, and it is not likely that her tongue had lost its sharpness; such weapons have been known to gain keenness from use.

By 1862 the Civil War was in its full and bloody stride, and ripples from the struggle reached Colorado and up into the mining camps. Congress had set off Colorado from Kansas in February, 1861, and immediately after his inauguration Lincoln appointed William Gilpin governor of the new Territory. He was the right man for the job. An old army officer and a graduate of West Point, he knew the West thoroughly, having been a major in Doniphan's noted regiment during the Mexican War. There were many Southern sympathizers in Colorado and Gilpin took vigorous measures to thwart their plans. His first act was to organize two companies of militia, which were equipped with arms



*Eddy & James Sampling Works at Leadville, in 1879*



*The Grant Smelter at Leadville, in 1880*



obtained from Fort Laramie. While these troops could deal with any local disturbance the pro-slavery men might foment, Gilpin rightly feared an armed invasion from Texas. Therefore, it was not long before he started recruiting an entire regiment.

In the event of actual service, Gilpin had planned to take personal command of the regiment. He was in Washington when warfare broke out and Major John M. Chivington took actual command. A Methodist minister, Chivington was the presiding elder of the Methodist Church in Colorado when the regiment was being formed. Offered the chaplaincy, he declined, remarking that he would join only as a fighting man. As his later career demonstrated, "hard boiled" best describes Chivington.

The year 1862 opened auspiciously for the Confederate cause. From the eastern shore of Maryland to El Paso, their lines were unbroken, and north of this line—in Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas—they had considerable power. But a supply of gold, and the sale of cotton abroad, was vital to their success. Already the South was beginning to feel the effect of the blockade of its ports. To overcome this strangling effect and to carry the warfare into the enemy country, an ambitious expedition was launched early in that year that had for its ultimate objective the Colorado and California gold fields and the opening to the Confederacy of the ports on the Pacific coast.

The plan promised well. There were few Union troops in New Mexico. No resistance was anticipated from the Mexicans in that Territory. Since there was no military organization there, and the population included many secessionists, it was thought there would

be no difficulty in capturing Colorado. Obviously, in Utah all would be well, the Mormons having only recently been in open rebellion. Thence to California, where the Southern and foreign element was very large and only awaited the word and arms and supplies to start open warfare. Previous to Lincoln's inauguration, the Southern leaders had placed so many of their disciples in government positions in California that the customs house was known as the "Virginia Poorhouse."

Early in 1862 General Sibley, a West Point graduate, started north from Texas with a Confederate force of about twenty-five hundred men. General Canby, the Union commander, had about nine hundred regular troops, two companies from the Colorado regiment, and two regiments of New Mexico volunteers, one of which was commanded by Kit Carson.

The first engagement was near Fort Craig, on the Rio Grande, where Canby was defeated, after which Sibley marched on to Albuquerque, and then to Santa Fé, which surrendered without resistance. Sibley's immediate objective was Fort Union, where there was a large supply of arms, ammunition, and other supplies. The road to that point was through the famous Apache Cañon, a grim and narrow gorge. Here, on March 26th, Major Chivington, with about four hundred men encountered the Sibley advance. After a bloody skirmish, Sibley paused for the remainder of his force to come up. Shortly after, all of the Colorado regiment was on the ground, as well as two howitzer batteries and some regular infantry and other troops.

Before daybreak on the morning of March 28th Chivington and his four hundred men left the Union camp and guided by a brave Mexican, Manuel Chaves,

climbed an almost perpendicular cliff and progressed along a terribly difficult path toward the rear of the Confederate Army. Meanwhile, the Texans fell on the remainder of the Union troops, and in a fierce battle forced them back a considerable distance. While this was taking place, Chivington launched a desperate surprise attack on the Confederate wagon-train and its guard of six hundred men. He completely destroyed it, burning all the food, ammunition, and surgical supplies. A messenger hurrying to the Confederate front caused Sibley to break off the battle at that point and ask for a flag of truce. This ended the battle of Glorieta, and started Sibley's retreat to Texas.

At Peralta, on April 15th, the remainder of Sibley's wagon-train was captured. The next night his force escaped across the river. He was closely pursued for over a hundred miles and was finally obliged to break up his troops into small parties, having lost over half his command, as well as all his supplies.

The Colorado regiment now went into camp near Fort Craig, where they stayed for several weeks, "... surrounded by tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, and rattlesnakes; living on rotten bacon and wormy crackers until the scurvy nearly destroyed those who had escaped the perils of war."

In October a force of California volunteers occupied New Mexico, and the Colorado troops returned to the north, to be engaged during the remainder of the war in fighting Indians on the Plains and bush-whackers in Missouri and Arkansas.

As the Civil War dragged on it had a double effect on the Colorado mining camps, including the profits of the Tabor store at Buckskin Joe. Gold was at a premium,

or rather, the paper currency issued in large amounts to carry on the war depreciated greatly in value. With the gold he sent East to buy supplies Tabor could now purchase much more than ever before, but because troops could not be spared to properly guard the trails, supplies were difficult to obtain.

The summer of 1863 was a trying one and that winter the Tabors had barely enough food to last them until spring, when the game returned to the high altitudes and the roads to the farms in the South Park were open. But 1864 was worse. That summer the Indians organized into large bands and constantly raided the settlements, as well as the trails to the East, capturing and burning stagecoaches and wagon-trains, killing every white man and child they encountered, and carrying off white women to a captivity worse than death. All connection with Colorado and the East was severed, nor could the West Coast be reached except by Panama. By August the stocks of provisions and other merchandise in the Territory were at a dangerously low level. Martial law was declared in Denver, and business throughout the Territory was almost at a standstill. Every able-bodied man in Denver was enrolled in the militia, and a number of blockhouses were erected to guard the town. It was a dark and gloomy period. No help could come from the East, where the Union and Confederate armies were locked in their final struggle. Everyone was aware that if the trails were not opened, so that supplies could be obtained before the roads were blocked with the heavy snows of winter, part of the population of the Territory would either starve or be compelled to march east across the Plains to the Missouri River, most likely fighting the Indians nearly all the way.



Doubtless because they had accomplished what they set out to do, in September a band of about five hundred Indians proposed to make peace. This proposal was not seriously considered because there were thousands of other Indians still on the warpath, and this particular group had committed as many depredations as any other band. As evidence of their good faith, they surrendered five white captives—a woman, a little girl, and three small boys. Five of the Indian chiefs, accompanied by the commander at Fort Lyon, came to Denver for a council. Colonel Chivington, who was now commander of the Colorado military district, told them that if the warfare did not stop immediately they would be exterminated. The chiefs returned to their rendezvous on the Smoky Hill. The warfare did not stop.

In October, Left Hand, an Arapahoe chief who had attended the Denver council, brought his band to Fort Lyon and stayed near the fort until the commander ordered him to take his warriors to a camp about forty miles away. Here he was later joined by Black Kettle and his band of Cheyennes. There were about eight hundred warriors, squaws, and children in the camp.

Meanwhile, Chivington had decided on a desperate measure. Under instructions of Governor Evans, he organized the Third Colorado Regiment for hundred-day service. It numbered about six hundred men, and part of its armament were two pieces of light field artillery. Chivington's force was not large enough to attack the main body of Indians, which numbered several thousand, and was located on the Smoky Hill, but he believed he could deal a severe blow to those camped near Fort Lyon, and thus induce the other Indians to cease their attacks on the wagon-trains and settlements.

Late in November this little army, with scanty provisions but ample ammunition, marched southeast across the prairies to Fort Lyon. On the night of the 27th camp was made but eight miles from the fort. Chivington was at the fort at daybreak the next morning. Before the garrison was aware of his approach, he had the fort surrounded with sentinels, so that news of the arrival of the regiment would not reach the Indian camp.

The day was spent perfecting plans for the attack, and at dusk the march was resumed, the regiment being joined by part of the garrison. According to Chivington's account, about midnight the guide said he was lost, and that Jim Beckwourth, who knew the remainder of the route, was blind from age and cold, hence they could not proceed until daylight. This meant a miscarriage of Chivington's plans and, learning that a half-breed, Jack Smith, was familiar with the country, Chivington ordered that he act as guide. When about ten miles from the camp, Smith said that any further advance would alarm the Indians, who would take refuge in flight. Chivington was not deceived. Instead, he told the guide that he was very hungry, that there was nothing he enjoyed more for breakfast than a broiled steak cut from the body of a dead Indian, and that if, touching his revolver in a significant way, Jack did not lead them to the Indian camp forthwith, then at daybreak he would dine off Jack's dead body. And men who knew Chivington said it was likely he would have kept his promise.

The march was resumed, with Smith well in advance, flanked on each side by Colonel Chivington and Captain Shoup, both with cocked revolvers in their

hands. At daybreak, as they approached the camp, the column was halted, and Chivington said that the officers in charge of the two detachments sent to capture the Indian pony herd were given strict orders not to fire on the Indian camp, unless they were fired upon first. He said his object was to secure the Indian pony herd, thus preventing the flight of the Indians, and then compel them to make a peace treaty, hostages to be taken to prevent its violation. An ingenious tale. Chivington may have had such a pacific intention in the back of his mind, but the undisciplined horde, of which he was the nominal commander, had no such purpose.

Chivington said that while rounding up the pony herd some of the soldiers approached within gunshot of the teepee of the head chief. They were promptly fired upon and one soldier and a horse were killed. This was the start of the battle, the Indians forming a line in front of the camp. Chivington now brought the whole regiment into action to support the detachments. The Indian line was not broken until the artillery opened fire. A running fight then ensued, which lasted until dark. Black Kettle and about two hundred of his warriors escaped—many to be slain four years later by Custer's command at the Battle of the Washita.

No prisoners were taken. The Indian women and children crowded together for safety, but the soldiers shot them down where they stood. All the wounded were slain, the troopers scalping and mutilating the bodies in Indian fashion. Chivington's loss was fourteen killed and thirty-four wounded. How many Indians were killed will never be known. Major Anthony's estimate was one hundred and twenty-five. Chivington said that

there were between five and six hundred dead on the field.

In 1865 there was a Congressional investigation of the Sand Creek affair. The committee reported: "It is difficult to believe that beings in the form of men, and disgracing the uniform of United States soldiers and officers could commit or countenance the commission of such acts of cruelty and barbarity as are detailed in the testimony." The committee also denounced Chivington in strong terms, saying that he had planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savage among those who were the victims of his cruelty. The committee concluded by recommending that Chivington be removed from office and be punished for his brutal and cowardly acts.

The report of the committee was representative of the opinions of men not in close contact with the Plains Indians. Most of the people of Colorado did not criticise Chivington, but upon his return to Denver with the regiment hailed him as their deliverer. Ever after Chivington was ready to defend his actions. In a paper he read at a banquet in Denver in 1883 he gave a vivid description of the battle, and the events that led up to it, and closed with the remark, "I stand by Sand Creek."

There was some justification for the actions of Chivington and his men. Over two hundred white persons had been slain by the Indians in Colorado that summer. This number is on record. Doubtless there were many more killed that did not come to the attention of the authorities. Chivington said that after the Sand Creek battle a number of fresh white scalps were taken from the belts of the dead warriors or were found in the teepees, including a blanket fringed with the scalps of white women.

There were other disturbances in Colorado that summer. A number of thieves and robbers had for years been preying on the various mining camps around South Park, Tabor's express service being one of their many victims. They took advantage of the Indian warfare and the consequent absence of troops and the lack of any enforcement of the law. Under the leadership of a daredevil named Reynolds, they organized themselves into an "army." Claiming to be Confederate soldiers, they raided a number of ranches in South Park, taking horses, food, guns, and anything of value they could find. Thus equipped for warfare, they marched forth to capture and sack Denver. On July 30th, in Platte Cañon, Reynolds and his column were attacked by a party of miners headed by Jack Sparks, of Gold Run. Instead of a desperate fight, for which Sparks and his men were prepared, the guerillas fled without firing a shot, abandoning much of their plunder and leaving one of their dead on the field. In the pursuit that followed five more of the robbers were captured, including a brother of Reynolds. The remainder scattered and fled up into the high hills where it was both dangerous and difficult to pursue them.

The Sand Creek battle opened for a while the Santa Fé Trail to Colorado, and a few wagon-trains, heavily guarded, crossed the Plains by that route during the fall and winter. These trains brought in enough food and other supplies to answer the more pressing needs. The Platte River route and the Oregon Trail were, however, closed tight. Here the warlike Sioux, the Blackfeet, the dreaded Northern Cheyennes, and other tribes, had massed their warriors and stopped all traffic.

The authorities at Washington at last began to give

some heed to the plight of the Western mining camps, as well as the lack of communication with the Pacific Coast. Troops could not be spared from Grant's army, which now had penned Lee and his followers within the fortifications at Petersburg. Sherman was at Atlanta, deep in the heart of the Confederacy, and needed every man he had for the campaign in the coming spring. It was not thought safe to weaken Thomas, although he had recently destroyed Hood's army before Nashville. In Missouri the situation was more favorable, Price having been defeated and his army driven into Arkansas and scattered.

To open the Western trails, Grant selected an unusually intelligent and energetic officer, Grenville M. Dodge, then commander of the Department of Missouri. When Dodge arrived at Fort Leavenworth in February, 1865, it seemed nothing could be accomplished. All the trails were blocked with heavy snows. The temperature ranged from zero to thirty below. The few troops stationed along the trails would not leave their stockades. Dodge was not a desk soldier. While he was suffering from wounds, having recently been shot in the head at the Battle of Atlanta, where he commanded the Sixteenth Corps, Dodge faced the bitter cold and started on horseback for Fort Kearney. First, however, he sent an order to Fort Riley to arrest any officer of any command who would not obey orders. This was directed at the Eleventh Kansas, the soldiers of this company having refused to leave their warm quarters and march nearly two hundred miles northwest to Fort Kearney. They marched. All the other troops in the district, as well as the reinforcements sent to Dodge, were now in the saddle, guarding the route over which

a few years later Dodge was to build the first trans-continental railroad. By the first of April the trail was open and the stream of wagon-trains and emigrants flowed west once more, never again to be halted.

Except during the summer of 1862, the Tabor's did not prosper greatly during the Civil War. By 1866 the Buckskin Joe camp had seen its best days and Mrs. Tabor strongly urged that they seek a new location. Tabor was not willing. He thought that soon a way would be found to recover the gold from the refractory ores of the district and that the camp would once more have a boom. Tabor was the same careless, optimistic man he had always been. Mrs. Tabor, however, had long since had her fill of talk about booms and pots of gold. Eventually she had her way. Tabor learned that old California Gulch was showing signs of renewed life. A profitable gold mine had been discovered near the location of the store they had operated at Oro in 1860 and '61. Prospectors were beginning to drift back to the district in increasing numbers, their ranks being augmented by a few men who had served in the armies during the war. In addition, the country all around California Gulch now swarmed with big game and market-hunters were finding their work profitable. Elk, deer, and bear meat brought top prices in every mining camp.

Tabor now did the obvious thing. In the summer of 1868 the stock of groceries and their few belongings were loaded onto wagons and again taken across the Park Range, to be dumped into one of the old cabins at Oro, built eight or nine years before. Once more Mrs. Tabor took up the dull round of selling groceries and other supplies, and serving meals, to the few prospectors and

hunters who had returned to this seemingly empty El Dorado. The future did not hold any bright promise. For ten years more she had to toil and save, her goal being an old age free from poverty. Every year their savings showed a slight increase. She said that when fortune at last smiled on their efforts they had accumulated, in property and in money, about forty thousand dollars.

Meanwhile, as befitting the head of the household, during this period of about seventeen years Tabor prospected, hunted, trapped, fished, drank and gambled to a slight extent. A venture in taking over a contract to cut railroad ties for a road being built up the Arkansas from Pueblo cost him two years of hard labor, but no profit was obtained. Plainly, Lady Luck and he were strangers. Never did she cast a smile in his direction. But despite his misfortunes, he remained a pleasant, jovial, generous man, well known and well liked. While he was now approaching fifty, his years were not a burden and he was as strong and active as a man half his age. Such was Tabor when Dame Fortune once more handed him the dice-box and invited him to try his luck.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE CARBONATES

BY THE fall of '61 the miners realized that California Gulch would soon be stripped of all its gold. As fast as their claims were exhausted they deserted the camp. A considerable number returned to the East, some to enlist in the Union or the Confederate armies. Others crossed the Continental Divide over Tennessee Pass and prospected the streams on the western slope. Some continued on to the diggings in Nevada, Idaho, and Montana. A few reaped good rewards by washing the placer at Granite, on the Arkansas, which the Tabor party had discovered in the spring of '60. Longer and better sluice-boxes and plenty of quicksilver enabled them to separate most of the gold from the black sand. A number of men preceded or followed Tabor over the Park Range and for several years washed the small streams on its eastern slope. Some of these men, and others, tiring of the uncertain rewards of placer-mining, started to cultivate farms in the South Park. Their produce found a ready market in the various camps.

After 1861 the output of California Gulch decreased rapidly. In 1869 but sixty thousand dollars was produced. Less than thirty thousand dollars was washed out the following year. One of the last acts of those remaining in the camp was to pull down an old log gambling house and saloon, to recover from its dirt

floor over two thousand dollars in gold-dust that had been dropped by careless or drunken patrons.

The gulch was now deserted by nearly everybody, and the elk, deer, and other game returned to drink again from the beautiful stream that once more flowed as clear and pure as it did when the Tabors first viewed it. The miners had wrought a great change in the appearance of the gulch. Gone were the velvet lawns the deer and elk cropped, as well as the willows and the beds of mountain flowers that fringed the stream. Gone, too, were the sun-dappled groves of aspens that filled the valley, and many of the stately pine trees on the nearby hills. Instead, were long rows of dilapidated little cabins falling into ruin, and in the stream bed were miles of ditches and rotting sluice-boxes and thousands of tons of rocks and gravel heaped into ridges or piles.

The miners had cut the timber on either side of the stream the entire length of the gulch. The clearing was about a half-mile wide. Farther away there remained a dense forest that covered nearly all the hills up to the timber line. It was an ideal country for big game. Willard S. Morse, now living in Santa Monica, California, camped near the present site of Leadville in 1874. He said there was then an abundance of all kinds of game, showing how quickly wild animals multiply when not hunted or disturbed.

The gulch did not long remain without inhabitants. As always happens after the exhaustion of a rich placer, certain men became interested in the "mother lode" theory. Their arguments were convincing—to themselves. "Where," they asked, "did all the gold in California Gulch come from?" The answer, they were quite sure, was from a "mother lode" somewhere in the vicin-

ity. Therefore, they examined every foot of the surrounding hills, sinking shallow holes wherever they encountered any signs of an ore body. They were searching only for gold. The possible discovery of silver did not enter their minds. There were scores of men engaged in this work, and they kept at it for years. One man met with success. In '68 Charles Mullen discovered the Printer Boy lode. This was near the head of California Gulch, hence was a partial vindication of the "mother lode" theory. The Printer Boy was a profitable mine and contained a large body of quartz, soft and rich in gold. A 25-stamp mill was erected and by 1875 the yield totaled about a quarter of a million dollars.

The discovery of the Printer Boy stimulated prospecting. Every summer more and more men tramped over the high hills searching for the mythical "mother lode," which they were quite sure was a wide vein of ore of unbelievable richness. Fortunately for Tabor, these men required food, and his little store at Oro supplied their needs. It was more than a grocery store. Here the men came for their mail; to enjoy Mrs. Tabor's appetizing meals; to discuss with other prospectors what they had found; to drink a bottle of whiskey and play a game of poker with the genial Tabor, while listening to his jokes, stories, and reminiscences of early days in Kansas and Colorado. In short, the Tabor store was a sort of general headquarters for the entire district. After a prospector had spent a week or two alone climbing over the steep hills, eating food he had prepared over a campfire, and almost freezing at night while sleeping on the bare ground, a visit to Tabor's, where there was good food, good whiskey, a warm cabin, and human companionship, was most welcome.

There were other early gold-lode discoveries in the district, but none of great importance. Farther down the Arkansas at Granite, in 1866, there was some profitable lode-mining for gold, but the shallow pockets were soon exhausted.

About 1875, on the Tennessee Fork of the Arkansas, in a mine called the Homestake, a large body of ore was found. Its discoverers were perplexed as to what to do with it. Unlike gold quartz, for which they were searching, it was rich in lead, but carried little silver and only a trace of gold. To treat this ore, a small smelter was built at the foot of California Gulch by A. R. Meyer. It was in operation for a short time in the fall of 1876.

In 1874 W. H. Stevens and A. B. Wood, who had considerable wealth, made a study of California Gulch. They became convinced that much gold remained in the unworked gravel banks that bordered the stream, and that this gold could be extracted by hydraulic-mining. There was not sufficient water in the stream for that purpose, so after securing control of a number of the old claims, they constructed a ditch twelve miles long from the headwaters of the Arkansas. It required several years and a considerable sum of money to build this ditch, but it accomplished its purpose and paid a handsome return.

An inconvenience the early miners in California Gulch had to contend with was the heavy boulders that had to be moved to get to the sand underneath. The great weight of these boulders was the cause of much profanity, but not one of the thousands who cursed them stopped to wonder why they were so heavy. They merely remarked, "These damned stones are as heavy as lead." No one carried the thought a step farther and

had an assay made of the boulders. To have done so would have resulted in the discovery that the stones were almost pure lead and silver.

Stevens and Wood were of a more inquisitive turn of mind. During their studies of the gulch they encountered the boulders. Previous experience told them that not even the terrific force of the compressed water they were planning to use would roll these boulders to any great distance. They had to be gotten rid of in some way. While Stevens was calculating the cost of dragging them out by ox-team, Wood came to the conclusion that there was something radically wrong with boulders that weighed so much in proportion to their size. His was a logical mind, and he reasoned that since they were as heavy as lead they must be either lead or some mineral as heavy. An assay confirmed his reasoning, for the boulders were found to be carbonate of lead, carrying a large percentage of silver. Wood and Stevens kept their discovery a secret until they were ready to secure government title to nine lode claims. These were at the head of California Gulch, and extended high up on the hills to the north and south of the stream. Each claim was about fifteen hundred by three hundred feet. The best known of the claims were the Dome, Rock, Stone, Lime, Bull's Eye, and Iron. Ore was first discovered in the Rock, the vein or ore-body being over ten feet thick. It contained but little silver but carried a heavy percentage of lead.

While there are other claimants, the best evidence points to Wood and Stevens as being the first to discover the Leadville carbonates. It was in 1874 that they assayed some of the boulders that had given the placer-miners so much trouble. They were in ore on the Rock

claim shortly before or about the same time the Gallaghers opened the Camp Bird. This was in the summer of 1876.

Three Irishmen, Patrick, Charles, and John Gallagher, located the Camp Bird in the spring of '76. On a hill north of Oro, and close to Stray Horse Gulch, they found a spot where the top soil had been washed away, thereby exposing a carbonate outcrop. This was merely a thin stringer of poor ore and could not really be termed a discovery of an ore body. All summer long, from day-break to sunset, these husky men toiled with pick and shovel, but the results were most discouraging. They were hoisting, by a hand winch, considerable ore, but of such low grade as not to be worth smelting. It contained plenty of lead, but lead ore was then without value. They had about exhausted their credit at the Tabor store and were ready to quit, when the ore began to improve. The next summer, when the Harrison smelter was completed and began to handle the ore, the Camp Bird started to pay handsomely. Finally, it made money faster than these three extravagant men could spend it. They saw the struggle was useless—that soon they would be loaded down with more money than they could use. The Camp Bird was sold for a huge sum, and later the three brothers departed for New York, London, and Paris, where there were better facilities for separating a fool from his money. Later, two of the brothers returned to Leadville, to squander the remainder of their fortunes and die in poverty.

Other claimants for the honor of discovering the carbonates are Jacob Long and his brother, and a man named Derry. In 1876, high up in the hills to the south and east of Oro, these men located four carbonate out-

croppings, later known as the Long and Derry mine. It was too late in the season to accomplish anything that year, but in '77 some ore was shipped out. The Long and Derry eventually developed into a very rich mine and yielded millions of dollars in carbonates. The first thousand tons of ore taken out averaged about a hundred ounces of silver to the ton, and thirty per cent lead.

The two Long brothers were friends of Tabor, having reached California Gulch in the summer of '60, shortly after Tabor's arrival. Like Tabor, they did not meet with much success that summer, securing only a small amount of gold-dust. In '61 they were at Buckskin Joe. Later they prospected all over Colorado. About 1870 they became obsessed with the "mother lode" theory and began to search the hills around the head of California Gulch. They were typical prospectors, usually ragged and without money, but always hopeful and persevering.

The story is not vouched for, but it is told that one morning Derry and the two Long brothers, while camping near California Gulch, found themselves destitute of food and money. Not wishing to stretch further their credit at the Tabor store, Jacob Long took his rifle and began to search for game. He located a deer and pursued it through the forest and high up onto a tall mountain. At an elevation of about eleven thousand feet, where the forest thinned, he managed to creep to within rifle range of the animal. Taking careful aim, he killed the deer at the first shot. It was not a clean kill, the struggles of the dying deer tearing up the ground where it fell. While dressing the carcass, preparatory to taking it back to the camp to his hungry partners, he observed that the torn earth had exposed what seemed to be a peculiar kind of

rock. Breaking off a small fragment he was surprised at its weight. Testing it with his hunting knife he was also surprised at its softness. It was black as coal, yet it could be cut like a piece of soft wood. Never before had Long encountered a "rock" of this kind. Heretofore he had prided himself on his knowledge of Colorado rocks. At a glance he could tell if a piece of quartz carried any gold. The fragment he held in his hand puzzled him. It looked like coal, but was much heavier than any coal he had ever seen. He decided to take a few specimens back to his partners. The remainder of the story has a familiar ring. They thought it was coal and tested it to see if it would burn. Placed between some rocks and on a bed of hardwood embers, an intense heat was generated. The "coal" did not burn but turned into a liquid—molten lead. Afterward when assayed this "button" of lead was found to contain a considerable percentage of silver.

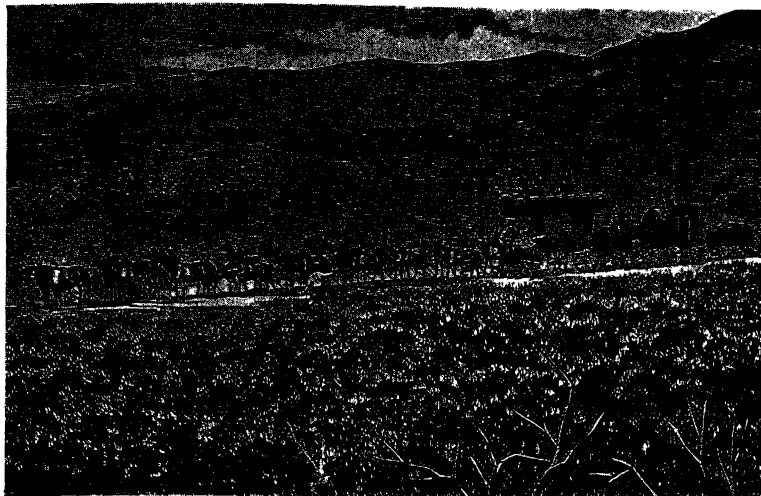
No one knows how much of truth there is in the foregoing tale. It sounds plausible—too plausible to be truthful. There is no evidence that Jacob Long ever said that this was the way the Long and Derry mine was discovered.

Among other claims staked out near Oro in the fall of '76 were the Adelaide, Pine, and Charleston. Some of these may have been in ore before the close of the year.

There may have been other mines in which carbonates were uncovered before the close of '76, but diligent search fails to reveal any record. The written history of those days is very scanty, nor can one depend on the recollections of men who years afterward recalled some of the events.

Because the lead carbonates were an entirely new kind of ore, it is not surprising that the early prospectors





*Mining Machinery on the Way to Leadville, 1879*



*Jacob Long Discovering the Long and Derry Mine  
Near Leadville in 1876*



were puzzled as to the way to search for veins. They were only familiar with gold-bearing fissures, the dip or slope of which could be determined with more or less accuracy. This knowledge was of no value in the Leadville carbonate belt.

While in the Little Pittsburg the carbonates were found at a depth of only twenty-six feet, on other claims the shafts had to be sunk three to five hundred feet before paying ore was encountered. Seldom were there any surface indications to show the presence of ore. All the prospector could do was to sink a shaft and trust to blind luck that ore would be found. Sinking these shafts was not an easy task. The hand winch answered for the first few feet, then mule or horse power was required. As the hole became deeper, a steam hoist was necessary. Freighting heavy machinery by mule teams from Denver over bad roads and across two mountain ranges was very expensive. There was no coal in the vicinity, hence the boilers were fired with cordwood, of which there was an abundance.

Hoisting the ore and spoil was not the only difficulty the early miners had to encounter. Power drills were then unknown. Powder holes were sunk with a hand-drill and a sledge—back-breaking labor indeed. For explosives they had only the weak, unreliable, and dangerous giant powder. Viewing some of the old shafts and underground workings, one marvels at the labor they required. That the miners were able to accomplish what they did with the crude tools they had is a tribute to their courage and tireless industry.

The carbonates were usually found lying on a bed of limestone. This limestone bed was not flat but had undulations or waves like those of a stormy sea. It was in

the depressions of the limestone that the ore bodies were the thickest and richest. The ore bodies were overlaid with porphyry and drift rock to a depth of fifty to five hundred feet. It was difficult to sink a shaft through this hard granite, but fortunately, when the ore was reached it was so soft that frequently it could be removed with a pick.

The ore bodies varied greatly in thickness and in richness. In the Little Chief, in one place the ore was over eighty feet thick, but of low grade. In the Matchless, Tabor's great bonanza, the bodies were very thin but frequently contained a large amount of silver. On May 24, 1884, the members of the "Bunch of Keys" theatrical company, playing at the Tabor Opera House, were shown through the Matchless mine. According to an account appearing in a Leadville newspaper of that date, among other things they saw was a "face" of ore about a foot thick that was almost pure horn silver. Evidently this was the ore body discovered on March 5th of that year. It varied in thickness from three to twenty inches, but assayed over twenty-five hundred ounces of silver to the ton, and thirty per cent of lead. Silver was then selling at \$1.11 an ounce.

From a return of but eighty-five thousand dollars in 1876 the yield of the Leadville or California Gulch district increased to over eleven million in 1879. Fifteen million was produced in 1880. The output later increased to nearly twenty million a year. Leadville was a "flush" camp until about 1893, when the decrease in the price of silver, and the exhaustion of several of the bonanzas, caused many of the mines to close down.

Unlike the smelting of gold ores, the extraction of silver from the carbonates was a very simple operation.

No roasting was necessary, nature having taken care of that part of the work. The ore was dumped into a water-jacketed iron furnace lined with fire-clay. The furnace was about six feet in diameter and of considerable height. With the ore were mixed the proper proportions of coke, charcoal and slag. The molten mass in the furnace eventually separated itself according to its specific gravity, the lead with its silver content entering a well at the side and bottom of the furnace, from whence it was dipped into iron molds, cooling into bars weighing about one hundred pounds each. By another process, too complicated to be described here, the lead and copper were separated from the silver.

In the early days the largest smelter was the Grant. In 1880 it had nine furnaces in operation and was turning out more bullion than any other smelter in the country. Its capacity then was about two hundred tons of ore every day. The La Plata smelter had four furnaces, each of larger capacity, and could handle over a hundred tons of ore a day. The smelters were run day and night and the furnaces were never shut down except for repairs. To allow them to cool entailed a heavy expense in drilling out the mass of iron and slag with which they were always filled.

Charcoal was the principal fuel used to heat the smelting furnaces, and an immense quantity was consumed. It has been estimated that fourteen hundred pounds of charcoal were required to smelt one ton of ore. With several hundred tons being smelted every day, the production of the necessary charcoal, which was all made in the vicinity, gave employment to a large number of men. Many of the old brick kilns, mute reminders of a vanished industry, are still in existence.

All this charcoal was obtained from the near-by forests. The United States Forest Service conjectures that the total amount of timber consumed for charcoal purposes in the Leadville district amounted to not less than a hundred million board feet, and may have been twice that amount.

Nearly every tree in the vast groves around Leadville was chopped down to supply the needs of the camp. An immense amount of lumber was used for timbering the shafts of the mines and for supports in the drifts. Buildings also required much lumber. Many of the trees were consumed for fuel prior to the arrival of the railroads in 1880. Today no one would suspect that Leadville was ever surrounded with the dense forests that at one time made it a paradise for big game.

Both Wood and Stevens eventually prospered as a result of their discovery of the Leadville carbonates. Stevens was past fifty at the time of the discovery, and a miner of long experience, having worked in the Lake Superior copper mines prior to his arrival in Colorado in 1859. He was the driving force of the partnership, although Woods was better educated, being a trained metallurgist.

The first two years, 1875-76, while they were sinking shafts on their claims, they were close to the end of their financial rope. Stevens later said, in order to pay his miners and purchase supplies, he sold everything he possessed, as well as all his wife's property, and also went into debt over ten thousand dollars. In 1877 he returned to Detroit and endeavored to sell a quarter interest in all the Wood and Stevens claims, including the Rock mine, for ten thousand dollars. He failed. At

that time no one in Detroit was interested in Colorado silver mines.

Stevens had other troubles. He said that about 1875 the California Gulch placer miners and prospectors had a mass meeting at Oro and notified him that unless he left the camp within a week they would send him away as a lunatic.

A few days later Stevens asked the chairman of the meeting the reason why he was to be expelled, remarking that he had always treated his miners well and paid their wages regularly. The chairman replied: "Well, you see, Captain Stevens, they've been up here several times when you were away and they have taken away buckets full of the old black dirt. They have rocked it and washed it out and they never had any of it pan out any indications of gold. They say you are crazy to be spending your money here and that your behavior is calculated to bring discredit on this part of the country."

When Stevens established a deadline around the Rock claim and threatened to shoot anyone who crossed it, people no longer doubted that he must be mentally irresponsible, but as he was a crack shot, no one endeavored to enforce the banishment decree. Stevens found it advisable, however, to divulge to his own miners that he was not searching for gold, but for silver and lead.

In the fall of 1877, following the erection of a smelter close by, the Rock mine began to yield a profit. Shortly after, Wood sold his interest in the partnership to Levi Z. Leiter, of Chicago, for forty thousand dollars. The next year a quarter interest brought half a million.

In March, 1880, Leiter and Stevens organized the Iron Silver Mining Company, transferring to it all their mining claims, but retaining a large stock ownership.

Another large stockholder was Leiter's Chicago business partner, Marshall Field. The company soon acquired, either by location or purchase, many adjacent claims, until it possessed about five hundred acres. There was long, bitter, and expensive litigation in connection with these claims, but the various law-suits established a better understanding and a clearer interpretation of the old mining laws. Intricate questions of placer- and lode-claim locations and apex rights were defined, and the mining laws as largely enforced today were then determined.

Not only did the Iron Silver Company spend huge sums defending its rights, thereby enriching many lawyers, but for years it maintained an armed guard to protect its property. Open warfare, with several men killed and more wounded, resulted from an attempt to invade the Iron Silver from a shaft on an adjoining claim.

There is no authentic data as to the output of the Wood and Stevens claims prior to 1882. Complete records are in existence, however, of the production of the Iron Silver Company from that year until the properties were closed in 1931, due to the exhaustion of the known ore bodies and the low metal prices which discouraged further exploration. During this period of fifty years 2,304,634 dry tons of crude ore brought a return of \$21,666,212.72, after deducting freight and treatment charges. The total cost of mining this ore was \$12,050,966.97, indicating net earnings of \$9,615,245.76.

Unlike many of the Leadville bonanza kings, Stevens quit the mining game when he had acquired a respectable fortune, retaining only his large interest in the Iron Silver, and investing his surplus in other fields. While there are no records as to the cash returns he gained as



a result of the discovery of the carbonates, it was a considerable amount. In 1886 he was rated as one of the wealthiest men in Detroit. He was then president of the Third National Bank of Detroit, president of Ward's Detroit and Lake Superior Steamship Lines, director of Parke, Davis & Company, chief owner of the National Wire and Iron Works, and owner of a quarter interest in the Iron Silver Mining Company which he valued at two and a half million dollars. In addition, he possessed three thousand acres of good farming land close to Detroit.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LEADVILLE AND THE LITTLE PITTSBURG

THE FOUNDER of Leadville was A. R. Meyer, and the town was established in 1877. Meyer was an ore buyer and had been purchasing ores in Park and Lake counties. His headquarters were at Alma, the new name for the old camp of Buckskin Joe. He was in close touch with the ore being produced by the Rock, Camp Bird, and other mines in the California Gulch district. He was so impressed with the richness of these ores that in April, 1877, he established a small sampling works on the present site of Leadville.

A few weeks later the St. Louis Smelting Company started to erect a smelter to handle the ores from this district. It was located not far from the Meyer sampling works. The blast furnace was in operation by October. Before the smelter was started, Wood and Stevens had signed a contract agreeing to deliver to the smelter a thousand tons of carbonates from the Rock mine. The smelter was named the Harrison Reduction Works, after the president of the company, Edwin F. Harrison.

Charles Mater, of Granite, had been running a small store in that town. He arrived in Leadville in June and started to erect the first commercial building. Before it was completed, several cabins had been built. Mater opened his store in July.

The Tabor baby, born at Deep Creek in the fall of 1857, was now a tall, thin, gangling youth of twenty. The previous year Tabor had started another small



*Meyer Sampling Works, Harrison Smelter, Leadville, 1879*



*Staging to Leadville, in 1879  
Rounding a curve on the road over Mosquito Pass*



grocery store down the gulch where the stream debouches into the Arkansas. It was located on the Tennessee Pass Road, over which there was considerable traffic. Doubtless young Maxcy Tabor, with the help of his father, looked after this store. While always unfortunate in his own mining ventures, Tabor knew the mining game. He soon sensed the bright future of the new camp, which was less than three miles from Oro. Therefore, in July, 1877, he moved to Leadville the stocks of groceries and other supplies in his two stores. They were housed in a fairly large log cabin.

By the time cold weather arrived there were about three hundred men in the district—prospecting, sinking shafts, or hoisting carbonates. Much of the ore was of too low a grade to be smelted at a profit by the methods then in use. A smaller amount was so rich that it paid to ship it over a hundred miles by wagon, and then forward it by rail nearly a thousand miles to St. Louis or Omaha. The mines shipping nearly all the ore were the Long and Derry, Carbonate, Camp Bird, and Iron. The district that year produced about a half-million dollars' worth of ore.

Regular stage service between Leadville and Denver was established that fall. There was also regular transportation by wagon of ore and freight between the two towns.

Leadville was organized as a town on January 14, 1878, eighteen men being present at the first town meeting. There were then about seventy cabins, shanties, and tents in the camp.

A town election was held in February and Tabor was chosen mayor, an honor he deserved because of the public spirit he had always displayed. One of Tabor's

first official acts was to appoint George O'Connor town marshal. Evidently some of the inhabitants did not want a law officer, for on April 25th O'Connor was killed by James Bloodsworth, who escaped on a fast horse. He was never captured.

There was a considerable increase in the population of the camp during the winter of 1877-78, but not until the warm weather arrived did the boom really start. Many rich mines were then coming into production. The large ore bodies, with their high percentages of silver, seemed inexhaustible. The fame of the camp began to spread all over the country. Here, it was believed, was a district as rich, or richer, than the Comstock, the great Nevada bonanza.

The business section of the town grew rapidly. The first of the better hotels was the Grand. C. C. Davis, who arrived in Leadville the following year, said it was a terrible hotel. It was owned by Tom Walsh, who later accumulated millions from Colorado mines, was a mining partner of King Leopold of Belgium, and was famous for the lavish entertainments he gave at Washington.

The first high-grade restaurant was the Tontine. The first of the better saloons was the Calumet. There was also opened that year what were then called theatres—the Coliseum and the Comique. No foul words need be wasted describing them. Hall & Coleman opened the first of the many elaborate gambling houses that were to add to the ill-fame of the camp. The Cyprians were also early on the ground and in the lower part of the town, near California Gulch, established a district that was to give to Leadville a sinister reputation that exists even today.

As did all the other business establishments, the Tabor store prospered greatly. The profits rolled in, and Mrs. Tabor foresaw that if business continued as it was for a few more years she and her husband would be able to retire with a modest competence. Retirement was far from Tabor's thoughts. Incurable optimist, he still had faith in his lucky star. The vision of the rainbow and its pot of gold was ever in his mind, as it had been for forty years. He was now nearly fifty, but the dreams of his youth still colored his thoughts and actions.

For twenty years the Tabors had worked and saved. Not yet had they found the pot of gold they had started out so bravely to discover, but it was evident that if they used reasonable care they could look forward to a comfortable old age. Fate had a different end in store.

For years opportunity had been knocking on other men's doors, but had avoided, carefully, the Tabor threshold. As a result, despite his optimism, there were moments when Tabor thought he had been born under an unlucky star. Never did a fortunate turn come his way.

The Kansas venture had failed through no fault of his own that he could discover. He had put forth his best efforts, but the first year drouth had ruined his crops, and the next year, when Nature had smiled most kindly, there had been no market for his overabundant produce.

He had lacked neither courage nor enterprise when he started on the Colorado venture. Early on the ground at Payne's Bar, he had chosen a good claim, but had been tricked out of it by an unscrupulous older man. He could perhaps have regained his claim

by assassination, but he thought murder was too high a price to pay for what was only a prospective fortune.

Again, at California Gulch he was among the first arrivals, and picked out what everyone considered a good location. From the claim immediately above that of Tabor's, as well as the one directly below, the owners reaped considerable fortunes. Tabor's daily return was but a few dollars.

Buckskin Joe was but a repetition of the hard luck at California Gulch. He always considered that he had thrown away the seven lonely years he spent in that camp.

Tabor had also studied the plan of digging a ditch from the headwaters of the Arkansas and bringing into California Gulch enough water to wash the gravel of the banks and recover the gold. But this was a tremendous task and required more money than he could command. He had to sit idly by and watch others reap the reward.

As did hundreds of others, Tabor tramped the hills about Oro looking for the "mother lode," but never did he find a spot worth prospecting to any great extent.

While Tabor was inclined to gamble and drink, he was not a slave to either habit, and the money he thus squandered was not a large amount. What money he now had was not gained by chance, but had been saved, slowly and laboriously, a dollar at a time, over a long period of years. And the gaining of this modest competence was due largely to the efforts of Mrs. Tabor, who had done more than her share in their joint efforts to amass a fortune.

Since his arrival in Colorado, Tabor frequently had the opportunity to observe men who seemed to have



been "born lucky." It required but a short time for such men to acquire fortunes. These men, he also noted, had no greater intelligence, nor did they work as hard as he labored. Indeed, when reading over the quaint histories of those early days, one is impressed by the strange actions of that fickle jade, Dame Fortune. Too frequently, strong, honest, courageous, enterprising men failed in their efforts, while the wastrels, the crooks, the cowards, reaped fortunes. And the gamblers, the liquor dealers, the keepers of the bagnios—these men, and their shameful women, all prospered. But the honest and industrious Tabor, with their small store and postoffice, could accumulate but a couple of thousand of dollars a year—a sum many of Tabor's associates would frequently risk on the turn of a card or squander in a debauch. In those early mining camps gold-digging was not confined to the placers and lodes. The painted *filles* in their gaily colored Mother Hubbard dresses were as eager for the yellow metal as any of the men with strong backs and weak heads who labored with pick and shovel.

Tabor had been in Leadville about a year when that moodful lady, Opportunity, decided to play a joke, and the victim she selected was Tabor. Instead of tapping gently on the Tabor door and then coyly disappearing, as she had always done in the past, she kicked down the barrier and dragged Tabor forth into a dazzling and golden light that wrought a great change in his character and in his career.

Here is how it happened, as truthfully as can be determined at this late day after sifting the mass of fiction that has been put forth purporting to describe the incident:

Early in 1878 George H. Fryer yearned for one of those million-dollar mines with which Leadville seemed to be surrounded. He was too late. Everywhere he turned he found the ground preëmpted. The whole district was plastered with mining claims. To jump a claim meant committing suicide. Bowie-knives and stones and cap-and-ball revolvers belonged to the past. The Winchester and the Colt cartridge .44 were the weapons now in use, and they were freely used on any one who attempted to jump a claim.

Freyer was a persistent individual. Eventually, for a small sum he obtained a half interest in a claim that everyone agreed was barren of ore. He proceeded to sink a shaft, and on April 4, 1878, encountered a body of carbonates. It was not a rich lode but the vein was so large that it yielded a small profit.

In Leadville at that time there were many other prospectors without a prospect to call their own. Two such men, who had vainly spent all their money searching for a mine were August Rische and George T. Hook.

Rische, the more picturesque of the pair, was from Prussia and had been a soldier in a German regiment in Missouri during the Civil War. He was a shoemaker by trade, but in those hectic days in a hectic new mining camp few men would follow such a prosaic occupation as pegging soles on the boots of a lot of prospectors. Rische was a born gambler. While working at his trade in Fairplay he squandered all his earnings "grubstaking" prospectors. Finally, he abandoned shoemaking and went to prospecting with George Freassle. It is said that one night, while busy preparing supper over a campfire. Freassle administered a swift kick to Rische's dog. Rische had a sharp temper, was "quick on the

draw," and he loved that dog more than a brother. Freassle escaped with his life, but that was the end of the partnership.

Not much is known of Hook's previous life, except that he was a German and had worked in the iron furnaces in Pittsburgh.

All through the West, since the days of '49, there had existed a gambling scheme known as "grubstaking." The person who grubstaked a prospector; that is, gave him a certain amount of food or money, was entitled to half of what the prospector discovered while the grubstake lasted.

It is probable that Rische first thought of the bright idea of approaching Harrison, the president of the Leadville smelter, with the suggestion that he grubstake them for a few weeks. Unfortunately Harrison was sick and could not see them. They discussed their problem with Adolph Donath, another German prospector they had met in Leadville, who knew Tabor, and to whom they were introduced by Donath.

Tabor was the right man to approach. He had a prosperous store, was mayor of the little town, as well as postmaster. Equally important was his reputation for honesty and generosity. He was interested, or pretended an interest, when Rische assured him that both he and his partner were prospectors of long experience and knew intuitively, by merely glancing at the ground, whether or not there was underneath a rich body of ore. Furthermore, they said that on an outlying hill they had already discovered signs that led them to believe that but a few feet below the surface was a wide and deep vein of carbonates.

It is probable that Tabor smiled at Rische's en-

thusiastic sales talk. All such fictions he knew by heart. For years he had listened to similar tales. Over Mrs. Tabor's objections, he had handed out many sacks of flour and sides of bacon to hungry men who had asked him to grubstake them. Never had any of these men reported a single worth-while discovery. It is doubtful if he expected any return from Rische and Hook. But they were ragged and penniless men, had been soldiers in the Civil War and had risked their lives to save the Union. There was not a trace of Scotch blood in Tabor. An ardent patriot, his purse was always open to a Union soldier. Rische and Hook obtained what they asked for, Tabor agreeing to pay for their board and lodging for a short time in one of the cheap and miserable log-cabin hotels in which the poorer class of prospectors lived. In return, it was understood, Tabor was to receive one third interest in whatever they discovered. His total investment was about seventeen dollars.

With a place to sleep, with food in their stomachs, Rische and Hook started to look around to see if they could locate a claim that someone would be foolish enough to buy. They were told that on a hill north of Stray Horse Gulch a man named Fryer had found some low-grade carbonates. While the outlook was not promising, they decided this would be as good a place as any to stake out a claim. Beyond Fryer's claim, which he had named the New Discovery, was some unoccupied ground. Here they drove their stakes, had the claim registered, and started to sink a shaft.

In the Leadville district at that time the size of a mining claim was one hundred fifty feet on each side of the center of the vein, and fifteen hundred feet long.



*The Famous Fryer Hill at Leadville, about 1879*



*A Mine on Carbonate Hill, Leadville, 1879  
There were then few steam hoisting-plants, the horse-winch here  
shown being more often used.*



On Eduard Rollandet's 1879 map of the district the claims run in every direction, and crisscross and overlap in a most confusing way.

Interesting indeed are the names given on this old map. When naming his claim the prospector let his fancy run free, as witness such titles as First Chance, Last Chance, Last Chip, Faint Hope, Ready Money, Hard Cash, Hidden Treasure. Many of the prospectors were from the land of the heather, if one may judge from such names as Robert Burns, Highland Mary, and Duncan. Ireland was represented by Robert Emmet, Maid of Erin, Shamrock, Solid Muldoon, and Irish Giant.

Rische and Hook showed little imagination in naming their hole in the ground. Hook came from Pittsburg. A short distance away was a claim named the Pittsburg. After a short discussion, they decided to christen their prospect the Little Pittsburg.

As was the habit with most grubstaked prospectors, Hook and Rische proceeded leisurely with the sinking of their shaft. There was no need to hurry, the grubstake from Tabor not being for any definite period. They realized, however, that some effort had to be made or they would have difficulty in securing another grubstake after Tabor had lost faith in their ability to find a profitable ore-body. There was another reason why they could not spend all their time dozing by the campfire. A certain amount of exercise was necessary to gain an appetite for the salt pork, beans, and black coffee on which they dined twice a day. As a result, the hole slowly gained in depth, and it was not long before they had to appeal to Tabor for the loan of a hand winch to raise the loose "spoil" they were digging.

Hard rock was next encountered, and Tabor now had to provide hand-drills, a sledge, and a supply of blasting powder.

The exact date is not known, but some time in May, 1878, when their shaft was but twenty-six feet deep, Hook and Rische broke through the granite crust and uncovered a body of carbonates. When Hook drove his pick into the soft, black, heavy ore he knew he had made a discovery of importance. His opinion of its value was confirmed by Rische, who was more familiar with the carbonate ores. It was with jubilant strides that they hurried back to Leadville to notify Tabor of their find. A glance at the sack of ore they had brought with them convinced Tabor that they had made a rich find. Early the next morning, leaving Mrs. Tabor and young Maxcy in charge of the store, Tabor joined his partners and with pick and shovel helped them dig and hoist the first wagonload of ore. The smelter bought it immediately for over two hundred dollars. That night, after one of the most appetizing dinners Mrs. Tabor ever prepared, and over a bottle of the best whiskey the camp afforded, the three partners agreed that it was a lucky day for all when Tabor agreed to back them to the extent of a few dollars in a venture that had about one chance in a million of being successful.

All of Tabor's friends, which meant nearly everyone in the camp and the surrounding territory, now hastened to congratulate him. The few early pioneers who recalled his hard luck at Payne's Bar, his early arrival at California Gulch, and his long struggle ever since, were especially pleased. Doubtless many of those who thronged to the Tabor store for a drink of the liquor



that Tabor was passing out freely in honor of the occasion remembered, or should have remembered, the sacks of flour, the sides of bacon, the ounces of gunpowder when no food was available, that they had received from Tabor, and for which they had never paid. Congratulations were all these men could offer, made more hearty by the tacit forgiving of past debts, and a lively hope of future obligations they could incur. If they could but avoid the baleful glance of Mrs. Tabor. Never was there a woman with such a retentive memory. She needed no ledger to recall every cent of debt due the Tabor store during the past eighteen years.

Tabor now gave all his time to the Little Pittsburg. The work was pushed at double shift, and as the vein or body was uncovered, it increased in size and richness. By July nearly a hundred tons of ore was being hoisted and shipped each week. The three partners had an income of about fifty thousand dollars a month.

In Colorado, at over ten thousand feet elevation, winter follows close on the heels of a brief summer. Leadville was not a pleasant place in which to spend the winter, and of this Hook was aware. He was not enamoured of the rough life of a mining camp, and with the approach of cold weather he expressed a wish to return to civilization, or at least to a lower altitude. Bad whiskey from a tin cup did not appeal to him; champagne from a crystal goblet was more to his liking—and he had the money to pay for it, although he was not a man who drank to any great extent. The upshot was that Tabor and Rische bought his third interest in the Little Pittsburg for ninety-eight thousand dollars. This sum, with the profits he had received gave Hook a fortune of over one hundred fifty thousand

dollars—not bad for a man who but a few months before had not a dollar in his pocket.

Hook may have been unwise to sell for that sum since Tabor and Rische, less than two months afterwards, had received for ore more than they paid him. But doubtless Hook had seen so many fortunes disappear over night that he wisely decided not to gamble any longer with mines.

Time proved the wisdom of Hook's decision. During the rest of his life he never lacked for money. His fortune of a hundred thousand dollars, which he bequeathed to the Odd Fellows Orphanage at Cañon City, continues to serve a worthy purpose. Half of the sum, which was given outright, is still in existence. The remainder, which will be added to the fund when all the heirs are dead, will increase its usefulness.

Meanwhile, the original discoverer of the famous Fryer Hill, George N. Fryer, sold his half interest in the New Discovery to Senator Jerome B. Chaffee for one hundred thousand dollars. Almost immediately, Chaffee resold it to Tabor and Rische for a handsome profit. Fryer did not long enjoy his wealth. Strong liquor and weak women—as prevalent and deadly then as they are today—caused his downfall. Five years later, in February, 1884, in a room in Tabor's hotel at Denver, with a revolver he blew out what few brains he possessed.

Chaffee soon regretted selling the New Discovery. Before long, in partnership with David Moffatt, he purchased Rische's interest in the Little Pittsburg, Winnemuck, and New Discovery, paying Rische over a quarter of a million dollars. This shoemaker now had a fortune of about a half million dollars. For years afterward he was a familiar figure in the barrooms and sport-

ing houses of Denver and Leadville, but will now be edged out of this documented tale.

Tabor and his two new partners, on November 18, 1878, formed the Little Pittsburg Consolidated Company, which was incorporated in New York the next spring for twenty million dollars. This consolidation included the Little Pittsburg, Dives, New Discovery, and Winnemuck, all located close together.

As developments progressed, it was found that the main ore-body was in the New Discovery and was of enormous size. It was reported that for five months in 1878-79, the average yield per ton from this ore was over a hundred ounces of silver and twenty-two per cent of lead. By the end of 1879 the total yield was more than four million dollars.

Tabor soon disposed of his interest in these mines for a million dollars; bought a half interest in the First National Bank at Denver; and also bought the Matchless, a prospect close to the Little Pittsburg, for over a hundred thousand dollars. There is no record of how much Tabor later took out of the Matchless, but it was a tremendous sum, the production at times running as high as eighty thousand dollars a month.

Late in 1878, in partnership with Marshall Field, the Chicago dry goods merchant, Tabor bought the Chrysolite, and other claims near it. In a short time these mines yielded over three million dollars. Tabor afterward disposed of his interest for a million and a half.

There is a tale, not well authenticated, that the Chrysolite was a barren prospect hole that its owner, "Chicken Bill" Lovell, "salted" with ore from the Little Pittsburg and sold to Tabor for nine hundred dollars.

The details are in a bit of doggerel by F. E. Vaughn, wherein it is related:

Some stories have sequels, so they say,  
And when Tabor went up the following day  
He wasn't feeling so very fine,  
For he found he had purchased a "salted" mine.  
Salted, I have said before,  
From the Pittsburg dump with Tabor's ore—  
'Twas enough to make a man feel sore.

But Tabor had money, and Tabor had sand,  
With a world of faith at his command,  
He put that shaft down ten feet more,  
And this time Tabor got the ore!  
Three million dollars was what he made,  
After the trick the smooth man played—  
That was because he always "stayed!"

Lovell gained his sobriquet, "Chicken Bill," from a diet of chickens he was forced to adhere to for some time. Late one fall, while en route to Leadville with a wagonload of chickens, he encountered a snowstorm which blockaded the road so effectively that he could neither advance nor return. Two or three weeks later, when the road was opened and Lovell was rescued from the grove of aspens to which he had retreated, he was found to be fat and healthy, with his campfire surrounded with chicken feathers and chicken bones. It was observed, however, that never after did he display any great fondness for chicken, no matter how it was served.

Following Lovell's death in July, 1886, the *Leadville Chronicle* printed a number of anecdotes about him. He seemed to have been a petty but clever swindler whose various schemes enabled him to live in comfort without danger of arrest. His "gold nugget" racket was the most successful. Nearly all tourists who visited the camp de-

manded a souvenir of some kind, preferably a nugget of raw gold. It was not Lovell's fault that any departed empty-handed. With some porous rock and a supply of copper filings, and with the aid of a shotgun, he manufactured as many "nuggets" as the market required. Frequentering the places visited by tourists, with the help of a "capper," who would enquire about the output of his phantom mine, Bill would display some of his nuggets. He avoided the hand of the law by never representing that his specimens were gold, nor on any of them did he set a price. The greedy tourist nearly always was willing to pay five dollars for a nugget that he was quite sure was worth ten dollars or more.

There were other Leadville mines out of which Tabor reaped huge profits, but complete and authentic records are not available. His interest in the Henriette, Waterloo, and Maid of Erin group, located south of Stray Horse Gulch, was at one time valued at a million dollars. Mrs. Tabor's lawyers claimed that his half interest in the Tam O'Shanter was worth a million dollars, and another million represented his interest in the Robinson and Bull Domingo. The Robinson was north of Leadville a few miles, in the Ten Mile District. The Wheel of Fortune, in this district, was another of Tabor's "investments." The Bull Domingo was in Custer County.

Adjoining Tabor's Matchless on the south and east was the Robert E. Lee. This was Leadville's greatest bonanza. In January, 1880, the ore produced sold for over three hundred thousand dollars. On the 13th of that month, in order to make a record, over a hundred thousand dollars was taken out in less than twenty-four hours. It is not on record that Tabor had any investment in the Robert E. Lee, but he was a stockholder in the

Hibernia, which joined the Lee on the south. This group, which included the Hibernia, Surprise, and May Queen claims, paid considerable dividends for a time.

Close to the Matchless, and adjoining the Little Pittsburg on the west, was the Little Chief, perhaps as great a producer as the Robert E. Lee. It was located by four Irishmen, Pete Finerty, the Dillon brothers, and a man named Taylor, and they were in the ore shortly after Tabor and his partners opened the Little Pittsburg. Tabor had an opportunity to buy the claim, but it was purchased by J. V. Farwell, the Chicago dry goods merchant, in December, 1878. Tabor thought the price, three hundred thousand dollars, was too high. By April, 1880, it had yielded about two and a half million dollars. It was sold that year to George D. Roberts and associates, and capitalized for ten million dollars. The president of the company was General Adelbert Ames, who died in 1933. He was then the oldest Civil War general, and in the winter a golf competitor of John D. Rockefeller. Ames married a daughter of Ben Butler, was a "carpet-bag" senator from Mississippi in 1870, governor of that state in 1873, and according to Claude G. Bowers, author of "The Tragic Era," a dull, stupid man of weak character.

The Breece Iron, on Breece Hill, was another mine that added to the Tabor fortune, although he did not have a great interest. It then produced only iron ore, but because of the fluxing qualities of the ore, the smelters were glad to pay seven or eight dollars a ton for all they could obtain.

It was not long before Tabor began to spread his mining investments into other districts. In the San Juan country, across the mountains and south and west of

Leadville, he soon had a number of mines and near mines or prospects. The Red Roger and the Saxon were the most profitable. In partnership with Rische, he bought the Alaska, Adelphi, and other claims. It is not likely they yielded any great profits, but considerable sums were spent for development work. While some of the veins yielded very rich ore, they were quite narrow and soon pinched out. Tabor and Rische paid over a hundred thousand dollars for the Adelphi group.

Despite his lack of success in that field, Tabor never lost his interest in placer-mining. One venture in which he invested a considerable sum was a placer on Bear Creek, in Park County. Here he gained control of a considerable acreage, built miles of ditches and flumes, and employed an expert from California to take charge of the enterprise. It is doubtful if any large profits were obtained. At that time, 1885, Tabor had so many other interests to look after that he could give the placer but scant attention. It is possible that it did not yield the profit it should because there is no way to identify placer gold after it is separated from the gravel, and the standards of honesty were never very high in the Colorado mining camps at that time. "High grading," stealing rich ore from lode mines, was a form of theft that was very prevalent. Placer mines were also frequently robbed of "dust."

Tabor soon invested heavily in real estate in Leadville, Denver, and Chicago. Other investments were in smelters, toll-roads, irrigating canals, and railroads. Later he had much copper land in Texas, a large grazing acreage in Southern Colorado, and a huge land concession in Honduras. "Marvels of the New West," a book published in 1892, contains a biography of Tabor, in

which it is said that he "is probably the largest land-owner in the world." This biography was evidently prepared from data furnished by Tabor. It states that he then had nearly two hundred thousand acres of copper land in Texas, and four million, six hundred thousand acres of grazing land in Colorado.

No one, not even Tabor himself, ever knew exactly how much wealth he took out of the various mines in which he was interested. Estimates range from five to fifteen million. It is likely that the total was between eight and nine million. This, however, is only a guess. But in those days a dollar was a dollar, and it bought much more than it does now. Despite his extravagant habits, his open-handed generosity, his gambling, the money he spent on his political campaigns, his foolish investments, his stock-market losses, it will always remain a mystery how he succeeded in spending the huge sum he did in less than fifteen years. There was no salvage when the wreck came. Not a dollar was hidden beyond the reach of his creditors.

What were the reasons for his downfall? His misfortunes cannot be attributed to any single cause, moralists to the contrary. He was not a fool or a weakling, although some of his acts belie it. On the contrary, he was a man of great courage, and in many of his business ventures he showed a high degree of intelligence. His faults, if they can be called faults, were kindness and generosity—too frequently misplaced. While his relations with the feminine sex were not always beyond reproach, he was a paragon of virtue when compared with many of his contemporaries. The quarter century following the Civil War was marked by brutality, hypocrisy, and corruption in high places. Morality and honesty



were at a low ebb. It was inevitable that his surroundings should influence Tabor's actions. He lived in a gambling age, in a gambling environment, and many of his investments were in an industry that was a gamble. Therefore, he took greater chances than a conservative business man would take today. This was not surprising. Then, it now seems, the whole country was speculation mad. Following the panic of 1873, there was an optimistic spirit throughout the country, perhaps more marked in Colorado and the West than in the Eastern states. It influenced Tabor. When the tide of his fortune flowed in, after ebbing for forty years, he was convinced it would never recede. He acted accordingly. He pushed his luck. His money was never idle. Always he was seeking new and profitable investments for his surplus income. Many of these failed, but Tabor was too good a poker player to expect to win every bet. He had faith in his luck, he had confidence in the prosperity of Colorado and the future of Denver, he was sure that the silver-mining industry would always yield rich rewards. Therefore, he spent his income recklessly, always sure that most of his investments would never fail him—that always they could be turned into liquid cash for more than they cost. This was especially true of his Denver real estate holdings. He could not vision a time when they would depreciate almost to the vanishing point. He could not picture the Matchless bonanza ceasing to pour out its silver flood. Or that the remainder of his voyage of life was to be "bound in shallows and in miseries."

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## THE INVESTMENTS OF A CRÆSUS

THE EAGER fortune-hunters who in 1878 began to stream into Leadville by the thousands were of a softer fiber than the placer-miners who first invaded the district in 1860. The journey to the new camp was now comparatively easy—less than two hundred miles from Denver over what were then considered good roads. The heat, the dust, the rough trails, the lack of wood and water, the ever-present danger from the Indians, the other perils that made the six-hundred-mile trip across the Plains a gamble with death, were now but an unpleasant memory. The decade following the Civil War had wrought great changes, not only in Colorado, but in all the country west of the Missouri River. It was the railroad era. Denver was now the terminus of several railroads, the first to reach it being a branch line built to make connections with the Union Pacific at Cheyenne, about a hundred miles to the north. The first train over this line arrived in Denver on June 22, 1870.

Much of the wagon traffic across the Plains really came to an end in July, 1867, when the Union Pacific reached Cheyenne, having been built from forty miles west of Omaha to that point in less than a year. With General Dodge as chief engineer, with the Casement brothers as contractors, with thousands of husky young Irishmen and other laborers, with hundreds of teams, by mule power and by man power, against the massed opposition of the Indians, the rails were pushed across

the prairies and up the Valley of the Platte at the rate of over two miles a day. Later, in Utah, under the spur of competition from the Central Pacific, which was being built east from California, the average was raised to five miles a day.

Another railroad, the Kansas Pacific, was built up the Smoky Hill River from Kansas City, and the first train reached Denver on August 15, 1870. Work on this road was started in the fall of 1863, and a year later it had progressed as far west as Lawrence, Kansas. Not until 1866 were there trains between Topeka and Kansas City. Mrs. George A. Custer says that in November of that year the rails were within a few miles of Fort Riley. General Custer spent the winter of 1866-67 at Fort Riley, and early the next spring took the field with the newly organized Seventh Cavalry, which had been detailed to guard the stage route, as well as the engineers who were surveying the remainder of the route to the Rocky Mountains.

The Seventh Cavalry, and other troops, had plenty to do for the next three years, the Indians contesting every mile of the advance of the railroad. Much of the fighting of Custer's troops was around Fort Wallace, about twenty miles east of the Kansas-Colorado line. In the old cemetery at the abandoned fort stands a monument erected by the survivors to commemorate the dead of Troop I of Custer's regiment and Company E of the Third Infantry.

A third railroad that reached Pueblo in March, 1876, was the Santa Fé. Here connection with Denver was made over the Rio Grande, a local railroad promoted by General W. J. Palmer and associates. The Santa Fé and the Rio Grande both attempted to build up the Ark-

ansas River and through the Grand Cañon, where there was room for only a single pair of rails. The Rio Grande eventually won, but had to grant trackage rights to the Santa Fé.

In 1879 this railroad was partway through the Grand Cañon, but the terminus was at Cañon City. From there passengers for Leadville traveled by stage. In April of the following year the rails were at Malta, five miles from Leadville.

Another railroad that was anxious to share in the rich profits of the Leadville traffic was the Denver & South Park. This was a local enterprise. In 1874 sixteen miles of track were built from Denver to Morrison. In 1877 it was decided to push the road up the narrow and rocky defile of Platte Cañon and into South Park. In the spring of 1879 the track gangs crossed the high Kenosha Divide, at over ten thousand feet elevation, and that summer and fall descended into and crossed South Park and began to grade and blast the route over Trout Creek Pass and into the valley of the Arkansas. Here, at Buena Vista, a junction was made with the Rio Grande, the tracks of that road being used for the remaining thirty-five miles into Leadville. Later, the Trout Creek route was abandoned, Leadville being entered from the north through Ten Mile Cañon and over a route that at one point reaches an elevation of nearly twelve thousand feet. The Denver & South Park was a narrow-gauge railroad, and in the early days was very profitable, being offered more traffic than it could handle. The owners then had ambitious plans for its future. They hoped to continue it west from Buena Vista, crossing the Sawatch Range at Alpine Pass through a long tunnel, and as the mining camps grew, to push on to the Pacific Coast.

Instead of profits, the road has been losing money for years and doubtless soon will be abandoned.

Previous to the arrival of the railroads, much of the wagon and stage traffic to Leadville was over part of the route the Tabors had pioneered in the spring of 1860. It ran up Ute Pass from Colorado Springs, and then west across South Park, the Park Range being crossed over Weston Pass, which rises to about twelve thousand feet.

Another route was from Georgetown, over the lofty Argentine Pass, which is about thirteen thousand feet elevation. It followed the Little Snake River to Dillon, and then south through Ten Mile Cañon. The stage distance was fifty-six miles and the fare was ten dollars.

A third route was from the rail-head of the Denver & South Park, which had then reached Jefferson. This route was through Fairplay and over Mosquito Pass, another hump over thirteen thousand feet high. The trip required two days and the fare was seventeen dollars.

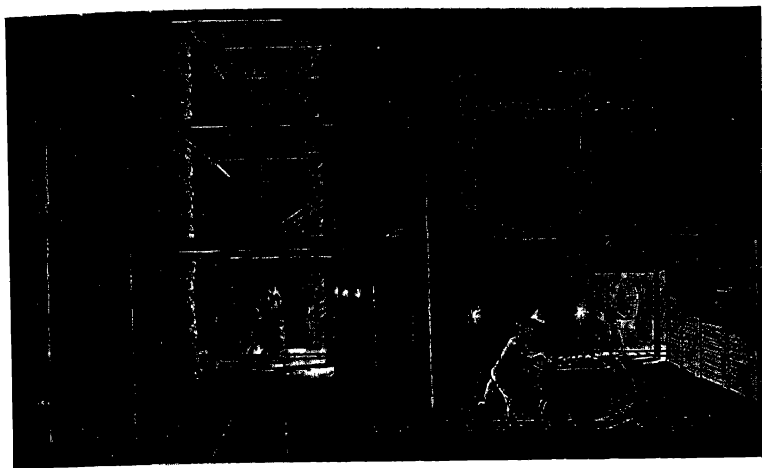
The stage route up the Arkansas River from Cañon City was the most popular. The distance was a little over a hundred miles and the fare was seventeen dollars. The trip was usually made in twenty-six hours.

Over these four routes, by stage and by every other sort of conveyance, as well as on foot, a motley crew poured into Leadville. The camp was well advertised. The dramatic story of the discovery of the Little Pittsburg, and the sudden rise to wealth of Tabor and his two partners, quickly spread all over the world. This Aladdin-like tale was followed soon by the news of the marvelous richness of other mines in the Leadville district, which were now coming into production with ores of amazing values. The result was a tremendous immigration to the camp. From a scant three hundred in

1877, the population increased the next year to several thousand. In 1879 there were five thousand. The census of 1880 showed over fifteen thousand. There were doubtless ten thousand more in the near vicinity. It is impossible to estimate how many men were employed in the Leadville freighting business. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, there was an almost continuous procession of mule- and ox-teams hauling the food, machinery, and other supplies the new camp required across the mountain ranges.

To all the new arrivals Tabor was, of course, a great object of interest. From the obscure owner of a small store in a small mining camp, almost overnight he had become a world figure. Never was there a better subject for newspaper copy, and newspapers and magazines, here and abroad, devoted much space to describing every detail of Tabor's life and his achievements. In Leadville, where Tabor invested much of his quickly gained wealth, he was the most popular man in the town. In a lyrical outburst, the editor of the *Leadville Herald* said: "He may be justly styled the father of Leadville. Having rocked its cradle in infancy, and sustained it generously through childhood, he is entitled to its allegiance and reverence in its maturity, both of which he unquestionably possesses."

In May, 1878, when the strike was made in the Little Pittsburg, in addition to being mayor, Tabor was postmaster of the camp, as well as treasurer of Lake County. That fall he was elected lieutenant governor of Colorado. It is not on record how much he contributed to the Republican organization in return for this honor, but doubtless it was a generous sum, the politicians of those days being just as hungry for money



*Underground Workings of a Leadville Bonanza*



*A Suburban Home at Leadville, about 1878*





as they are now. From all accounts, Tabor filled the office in a satisfactory way. Before the Legislature convened he spent considerable time studying parliamentary law. As president of the Senate, his opponents agreed he made a good presiding officer, his experience in the Kansas Legislature being of considerable help.

The wealth that poured in on Tabor and his partners that summer and fall made it necessary to establish some place to keep it. In October Tabor started the Bank of Leadville. He was president, and Rische was vice-president. In a short time the bank had a large sum on deposit. All had faith in Tabor's honesty, a reputation gained by years of fair dealing. At first the bank was merely an iron safe in the Tabor store, Mrs. Tabor or one of the clerks entering the deposits in a small blankbook kept for that purpose. Since no interest was paid, all transactions were in cash, and as Mrs. Tabor knew all of the depositors, the bookkeeping was a very simple matter.

Tabor retained his position as postmaster for some time. It was a fourth-class office, the salary paid depending on the amount of stamps sold. Out of his own pocket Tabor provided a suitable building and paid the wages of twenty clerks to handle the mail. There was but one mail each day, and the clerks worked all night to sort it for the morning delivery. Long before the doors opened, a line of men extended down the street, all eager to obtain their mail. Positions at the head of the line sold for from one to five dollars.

The camp had metropolitan aspirations, impossible to gratify with kerosene lamps. Tabor bought a majority of the shares, amounting to seventy-five thousand dollars, to establish a gas works.

It was thought the town needed a first-class theatre, the "joints" along State Street catering only to drunken miners and prospectors and the lowest dregs of a more or less depraved population. Tabor responded by erecting the finest structure of its kind west of St. Louis. It seated about nine hundred people and cost sixty-five thousand dollars. Still in existence, it is now the local Elks Home.

The Tabor Opera House, as it was then named, opened in November, 1879. The event was a milestone in Tabor's career, as well as in the history of the new camp. By virtue of its theatre, Leadville was no longer a town but a city. The theatre was patronized liberally and for years yielded a considerable profit.

In addition to the theatre, which was in the rear of the structure, the building included two stores on the ground floor; one was an "elegant" saloon and gambling hall, and the other a restaurant of the better class. Tabor and the lessee of the theatre, Bill Bush, had their offices on the second floor, facing Harrison Avenue. Part of the third floor, with its bedrooms, was an annex to the Clarendon Hotel, to which it was joined with a bridge. These rooms were usually occupied by theatrical people.

Many famous stars of the New York stage appeared at the Tabor, and it was noted throughout the West until its lustre was dimmed by a more magnificent theatre Tabor later built in Denver.

By 1879 robberies and other crimes of violence in Leadville had increased to such an extent that business men began to fear for the safety of their property as well as their lives. A number of military companies were organized to protect the town, not only from the lawless

element within its borders, but from the White River band of Ute Indians, who were committing many depredations.

The smouldering Ute Rebellion flamed forth in September of that year. The Utes had many grievances. They had been shamefully neglected by the Indian Bureau at Washington, which was both corrupt and inefficient. During the summer the Utes had been attacking settlers near the Ute reservation, slaughtering game and cattle, and setting fire to the forests and meadows. The agent, Nathan C. Meeker, well advanced in years, could not control them. A colleague of Horace Greeley, bred in the humanitarian school of that able but eccentric dreamer, he was not fitted for the post.

Meeker was a man of courage and determination and had resolved that the Indians should be "civilized"—the children sent to school and the bucks taught to be farmers. He was warned to cease, and when he would not stop the white employees from plowing a field near the agency, he was assaulted by one of the Indians. Meeker now realized that the Indians were beyond his control and asked that troops be sent to guard the agency.

A force of about two hundred soldiers, under the command of Major Thornburg, marched south from Fort Steele, Wyoming. At Fortification Creek the infantry company and part of the wagon-train were left in reserve, and with the cavalry troops Thornburg hurried toward the agency.

As soon as the Utes learned of the approach of the troops they slaughtered Meeker and every white male employee at the agency, nine in all, burned the agency buildings, and carried off into captivity Meeker's wife and daughter and another white woman and her two

children. On the same day the Utes also ambushed Thornburg's command as it entered a narrow defile and besieged it for seven days.

As he approached the cañon, it is not likely that Thornburg anticipated an attack. Indeed, no one thought the Utes would war on regular troops. As a consequence, when the attack was launched, the wagon-train was nearly a mile to the rear and but lightly guarded. The Indians quickly formed a thin line between the troops and the train. In the wagons were all the food, spare ammunition, and other supplies. A soldier of long experience, Thornburg grasped the situation. Deploying the command so as to face the fire that was coming from the front, as well as from the bluffs on either side of the stream, he gave orders that it slowly withdraw toward the wagon-train. At the head of twenty men, Thornburg now charged the Indian line at his rear. Only eight troopers reached the wagons, Thornburg being one of the first killed. Eventually, the remaining soldiers reached the train and, using the wagons for breast-works, maintained their position. The retreat to the wagons, and the battle around the train, cost twelve more lives and forty-two men were wounded. Except Lieutenant Cherry, every officer was either killed or disabled. Soon all the mules and horses were also killed or wounded. It began to look like a second Custer massacre. Captain Payne, who was now in command, was an able officer. By his direction, the wounded animals were shot, and the bodies of all the dead animals, as well as boxes, sacks of flour and corn, and other supplies, were piled up for fortifications. Picks and shovels were also plied to strengthen the defenses. All

this was accomplished under a galling fire from the Winchester rifles with which the Indians were armed.

The Indians lacked discipline and leadership. Not until toward sundown did their chiefs organize a united attack. When it came, encouraged by the bravery of Payne, made desperate by the knowledge that capture meant certain death by torture, supplied with plenty of ammunition, the cavalymen beat off a determined charge of the Indians. This was the only open attack with which they had to contend. By the next morning the rifle-pits were so deep that it would have required artillery to capture the camp.

On the third day of the siege the beleagured soldiers were reinforced by about forty men of a colored cavalry troop which arrived by forced marches from North Park, near Leadville. They fought their way into the safety of the rifle-pits, but an Indian sharpshooter quickly killed all their horses. The command was not yet strong enough to raise the siege, and it was not until four days later that they were rescued by General Merritt and the Fifth Cavalry, which covered the ground from Rawlins in three days. The last march of seventy miles was made in a trifle over twenty hours.

Several weeks elapsed before the Utes surrendered their women captives, who were shamefully treated. Their release was brought about by the diplomacy of Chief Ouray, of the Southern Utes, who was also instrumental in saving the White River band from the punishment it deserved.

The White River Agency was over a hundred miles from Leadville and the camp was never in danger of an attack. Nevertheless, the town was much excited and all of the military companies were eager to march

against the Utes—or professed to be. These companies included the Leadville Guards, Carbonate Rifles, Wolf Tone Guards, Tabor Highland Guards, and the Tabor Light Cavalry. There were about sixty men in each organization.

The military companies bearing his name doubtless cost Tabor a considerable sum, their uniforms, which he supplied, being very elaborate. Willard S. Morse was a member of the Light Cavalry, and in a recent interview he said he still had the insignia he wore on his coat when in civilian dress. It is of solid gold, with the letters, T L C, placed between a pair of crossed sabres. Morse was one of the first clerks or tellers in Tabor's Leadville bank. He recalled that frequently, when Tabor was returning to Leadville from Denver, the militia company would be detailed to escort him from Malta, then the end of the railroad. Arriving at Leadville, they would be his guests at a wet and elaborate dinner at the Tontine restaurant.

Morse said that while the uniforms of the privates in this company were not to be sneezed at, those of the officers were most gorgeous. As proof, he said that one night the captain, in full regalia, called at the home of a friend. The little daughter answered his knock. The mother asked who was at the door. The child replied, "I don't know, but I think it is God."

In addition to his mines and real estate holdings in Leadville, Tabor also invested considerable money in the various business enterprises of the new camp. A complete record is not available, but the following list will show how varied were his investments:

He organized and was the first president of the Leadville Stock and Mining Exchange.

He founded the Leadville Smelters Supply Company, which dealt in bullion, coke, charcoal, and smelting and mining supplies.

Another concern he established, and of which he was the first president, was the Tabor Milling Company, which erected a fifty-stamp mill that could handle a hundred tons of ore a day.

Other Tabor Leadville enterprises were toll-roads, lumber and charcoal companies, an insurance company, and a street-car company.

About 1880 Tabor was partly instrumental in starting the town of Tabor City, located about fifteen miles north of Leadville. At one time it had high hopes of being a flush camp. Many years have passed since its name has appeared on any map. It is doubtful if it ever had two hundred inhabitants.

It was perhaps against his will that Tabor became interested in the leading hotel in Leadville. In 1884, when he was living in Denver, construction on a new hotel in Leadville ceased for lack of money. Tabor was appealed to and promptly subscribed enough to complete it.

When Tabor agreed to provide the necessary funds, the other forty stockholders unanimously agreed to name the hotel the Tabor Grand. Now the Vendome, the hotel is no longer "grand." While still in use as a hotel, the great gambling room and the magnificent bar are now empty of the throngs that once crowded them, and the wonderful furnishings that then dazzled the poor prospector have long since disappeared.

This four-story building, of brick with stone trimmings, when erected was the largest and most costly in town. It was opened July 13, 1885, having been leased

by Mrs. J. C. Hutchinson. She was well known and popular, having been very successful with another hotel in the town. The opening was celebrated by a banquet and ball attended by all the prominent people in the camp. The enraptured reporter who described it said it was the most magnificent affair he had ever witnessed.

It is unfortunate that this reporter contented himself with the bare statement that the ladies were magnificently dressed, many wearing costumes of diamonds and other precious stones. To know what was the proper thing for a lady to wear at a gala affair in Leadville at that time, it is necessary to quote from a woman's description of a party given a few months later by Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Patrick in honor of two of Mrs. Patrick's nieces. The "exceptionally handsome, elegant, and vivacious Mrs. Patrick wore sapphire velvet en train, with front of cameo-pink brocaded velvet, square corsage of point lace, with diamond ornaments." A Miss Aiken was attired in "pink silk and velvet en train decollette, powdered hair and diamonds." Miss Ella Boynton doubtless attracted attention, for she wore "pink brocaded silk en train, elaborately trimmed with point lace, corsage decollette, high coiffure adorned with pink pompoms." Evidently the older ladies dressed in a more simple manner, the costume of a Mrs. Loker being "white albatross with draperies of Alençon lace and diamonds, with corsage of natural flowers."

The Tabor Grand, from all accounts, was beautifully furnished, and the barroom was justly considered to be a model of good taste. Not many saloons had such an assortment of rare and expensive liquors and imported wines. The camp had traveled a long way from the care-free days of California Gulch when a couple of



whiskey barrels and a plank and a tin cup constituted a gin-mill.

But despite the excellence of its beverages, there was not always peace and good fellowship at the Tabor bar. Moulton Brothers, the lessees, employed as head bartender a stalwart individual known only as "Powder House Billy." An incident that attracted newspaper attention occurred on March 21, 1886. George Larabee, afflicted with a Scotch complex, appreciated the quality of the drinks Billy served him from time to time. But when it was suggested that he pay for the liquor consumed, Mr. Larabee declined, remarking that he did not wish to encourage intemperance by paying the charge, and thus enable the owners of the bar to purchase more liquor for other people to consume. As anyone who frequented the Tabor bar can recall, Billy's repartee was as quick as his fists were heavy. As he leaped over the bar, he remarked, "Then I will encourage you to keep out of this barroom." A few moments later the temperance advocate found himself on the street, and in a somewhat battered condition. In the police court the next morning Billy was unrepentant and declared he would mete out the same treatment to anyone who assumed such an attitude toward paying a drink bill.

The various churches of Leadville found in Tabor a liberal contributor. There were many denominations, and to all he gave financial assistance.

Father Robinson, later a monsignor, built the large Church of the Annunciation. There is no record of the amount, but it is known that Tabor contributed liberally.

Doctor Mackaye built the beautiful little church of St. George's. Tabor loaned three thousand dollars to the

building fund, charging interest at one per cent a year. In 1884 the *Herald* quoted him as saying he would cancel the loan upon the payment of a thousand dollars.

The Reverend Tom Uzzell built a Methodist church on Spruce Street. Tabor supplied a handsome set of glass chandeliers.

The Jewish people of Leadville wished to build a synagogue. Tabor presented them with a plot of ground at the corner of Fourth and Pine. Here Temple Israel was erected. It was completed in September, 1884. This benefaction aroused the ire of some of Tabor's political enemies. C. C. Davis, then editor of the *Leadville Chronicle*, said that all such contributions were for the purpose of furthering Tabor's political ambitions.

These were not the only churches Tabor helped to build. Chivington, now a major, who had commanded the troops at the bloody Sand Creek fight where so many Indians were killed, visited Leadville on July 30, 1884. In an interview which appeared in the *Herald* on that date, after defending the conduct of his men and himself at that battle, he said:

"I came to this section in 1860. Governor Tabor and I built the first church which was ever built here at Oro. It was a log structure and Tabor helped to roll the logs along with the rest of the crowd. It was a Methodist church. When I first came here it was in the interest of the church. I am a Methodist minister and then was presiding elder for Colorado."

It is impossible to enumerate all of Tabor's other activities in Leadville, or to estimate the amount of money he contributed to charitable agencies. It is not known if he kept a record of his expenditures, but the money he passed over to old friends, casual acquaint-

ances, and strangers, while each was a "loan" for a small amount, must have totaled a huge sum.

In 1879 Tabor was spending much of his time in Denver, and began to make heavy investments in that town. The first was an office building at Sixteenth and Larimer. This was followed by the erection of the Tabor Block at Eighteenth and Larimer. The stone for this building was quarried in Ohio, and the structure, which is still standing, cost about two hundred thousand dollars.

Across the street from the Tabor Block an English corporation had built the Windsor Hotel. It was a magnificent structure, then the finest building of its kind west of Chicago. Tabor leased it, fitted it out with handsome furniture, and opened it as a hotel in June, 1880. The active management was in the hands of Bill Bush, lessee of Tabor's theatre in Leadville, and of which more hereafter.

The Windsor is still operated as a hotel, but long ago its prestige departed. About ten years after it opened it was overshadowed by a new hotel in a better location, the Brown Palace. One thing that injured the Windsor as a high-class hotel was its location, which was close to the notorious "red light" district. This statement may be questioned. The cynical Willard S. Morse, who succeeded Bush as manager, said that the proximity of this district was an advantage to the hotel.

Ambitious to outshine all other Colorado millionaires, Tabor now purchased from a real estate dealer named Henry C. Brown the finest private residence in the town. Alterations and furnishings added considerable to the cost. Its architecture was in the best style of the General Grant period. A Sears-Roebuck store now

occupies part of the site, which covered a full city block.

But Tabor's greatest achievement was the Tabor Grand Opera House, a huge five-story building. In addition to the theatre, there was space for many offices, as well as a number of stores. Edwin Booth said the theatre was the best equipped and the most beautiful he had ever seen. It was formally opened to the public on September 5, 1881. Emma Abbott, a famous grand opera star of that period, headed the company that gave the initial performance. Two features which distinguished the auditorium were an immense cut-glass chandelier and a beautiful drop-curtain painted by Edward Daingerfield. The latter was a splendid piece of work. It showed the ruins of an ancient temple, with lions crouching among the broken pillars, and bore the following inscription, by Charles Kingsley:

"So fleet the works of man  
Back to the earth again,  
Ancient and holy things  
Fade like a dream,  
And the hand of the master is dust."

The opening of the Tabor Grand was a great social event. The newspapers gave it much space, and the reporters used up all their adjectives describing the theatre and the jewels and gowns of the women in the audience. But the most fulsome eulogies were reserved for Tabor. He was hailed as the man who had put Denver on the theatrical map; who had, by the expenditure of part of his immense fortune, changed Denver from a town to a city.

Tabor deserved all the praise he received. The theatre was an excellent advertisement for Denver, and

the great galaxy of stars that appeared before its foot-lights brought many visitors to the town. Edwin Booth, Henry Irving, Joseph Jefferson, John Drew, Richard Mansfield, William Gillette, Nat Goodwin, James O'Neill—these names then, or later, were household words. Equally famous were Sarah Bernhardt, Fannie Davenport, Madame Modjeska, Clara Morris, Ada Rehan, Cora Potter, Christine Nilsson, and the immature Minnie Maddern. And can words describe the loveliness of Mary Anderson, Lillian Russell, Lily Langtry, Louise Montague, Della Fox, or the slim Fay Templeton?

As was his habit in Leadville, Tabor now contributed much money to Denver charities, as well as to various objects of public welfare. Volunteer fire departments were one of his hobbies. He contributed the money to buy the equipment of the Tabor Hose Company, of Leadville, which was organized in March, 1879. In January of that year the Tabor Hose Company of Denver was organized, Tabor supplying the money for the equipment. Mrs. Tabor and he were the guests of honor at the first entertainment and ball, which was held in January, 1880.

As he was in Leadville, Tabor now was the best known and most popular man in Denver. His fame spread. For a huge sum, over a million dollars, he purchased the controlling interest in a canal and dock company near Chicago. This company owned about five thousand acres of land near Calumet. Since his wealth seemed inexhaustible, the inhabitants of that city began to look forward to the time when he would spend other large sums in Chicago.

Tabor now began to consider New York as a field

for investment. The success of his Denver theatre led him to believe that he could operate at a profit a string of similar theatres in a number of cities, starting with New York. This grandiose idea never materialized.

Tabor's many investments, his large gifts to charity, his open-handed generosity to his old friends, his great and quickly gained wealth, were now first-page newspaper copy all over the country. It is safe to say that by 1882 few men were better known. He was a sort of popular idol, and there were many suggestions that he be elected President.

Theatres, hotels, banks, office buildings, gas works, canals, railroads, newspapers, a score or more of gold and silver mines, smelters, stamp mills, toll roads, lumber companies, real estate and other investments in many cities—these all required attention. But what really interested Tabor, an interest that brought about his downfall, was politics. Since those stirring days in Kansas, he had always longed for a political office of some kind. He was greatly pleased with his election as lieutenant governor of Colorado. It gave him considerable influence with the Republican organization of that State. Soon he began to reach out for more power, using his wealth to gain his ends. Now he began to foresee that it would not be long before he would be high in the councils of the National Republican Party.

The power of money! Especially in politics! Never was it more potent than in the West in the '80s. Money—the possession of apparently unlimited sums—wrought a change in Tabor. He found it opened all doors. Men, prominent men in every field, now sought his friendship. They were eager and willing to do him favors of any kind. Tabor would not have been human if he had

not recognized that his wealth gave him an entirely different standing in the world. It reacted on his character. Yet he never became "high hat" or failed to recognize those who knew him in his early and less prosperous days. As in the '70s, as at California Gulch and Payne's Bar, the "busted" prospector could always depend on Tabor for a grubstake, and what was just as important, a hearty handshake and an invitation to visit the nearest saloon for a drink. But Tabor was not satisfied with such easily bought popularity. He began to believe, and there was reason for the belief, that his wealth would enable him to obtain any political office he desired—and he almost succeeded!

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## BELATED WILD OATS

THAT May evening in 1878, when Hook and Rische dumped on a counter in the Tabor store the first sack of ore from the Little Pittsburg—did Mrs. Tabor sense that this marked the beginning of the end of her life with Tabor? Did some intuition tell her that much of what she had struggled for during the past twenty years was soon to vanish? True, the money Tabor and she had saved, penny by penny, and at the cost of toil and hardship, was to be multiplied a hundredfold. That, however was later to seem but slight compensation for the knowledge that her husband was no longer interested in her welfare. It did not repay her for the bitter punishment he was to inflict when he cast her off for a younger and handsomer woman.

The separation was inevitable. Poverty, and the watchful eye of Mrs. Tabor, had for years compelled Tabor to travel the straight and narrow path. It would be difficult now, as it was impossible then, for a wife to guard a husband who had the income Tabor was now reaping from his mining and other ventures. Mrs. Tabor did what many other women have done since the world began—she lashed out with a tongue that grew more bitter and more sharp as she grew older. Tabor disregarded her bickerings. Eagerly and joyfully, with the aid of what seemed to be unlimited wealth, he began to sow those wild oats which he had been forced to save for so many long years.



The rift in the Tabor marital lute did not start immediately. For the first year or two Tabor was so busy investing the millions that were rolling in that he had little time for the amusements offered by a flush mining camp, or the more sophisticated entertainments to be found in the frontier town of Denver. It was some time in 1880 that the Tabors moved to Denver, and shortly after Mrs. Tabor was installed in the gaudy palace on Lincoln Avenue. Outwardly, they were a devoted couple. In the old files of the newspapers of that period can be found occasional references to their appearance together at social functions. Gradually, however, Mrs. Tabor began to see less and less of her husband. It was necessary that he be in Leadville much of the time. There were frequent trips to Chicago and New York. While in Denver he seldom spent an evening at home. He had now discovered other places more to his liking, and free from a termagant woman. These other women—well skilled were they in administering to the comfort and pleasure of any man who could satisfy their greed. What blandishments and enticements did they not use to gain a trickle of the golden flood that was pouring in on Tabor!

Mrs. Tabor now knew little of Tabor's financial affairs, but her thrifty New England conscience was horrified at the price paid for the Denver home and the expense of running it. It was said that she regretted she could not fill the house full of paying boarders, and pasture cows on the broad lawns, to reap an income from the butter and milk, as she was later compelled to do.

The cost of the Tabor home was but a drop in the bucket in the total of Tabor's expenditures. He was now "rolling 'em high" in the gambling houses, the saloons,

and the bagnios of Leadville, Denver, Chicago, and New York. Nor was the stock market overlooked, and he was soon plunging heavily. Politics was another drain on his income. In short, as one of his now ancient contemporaries recently expressed it, "From 1880 to 1888 Tabor was spending money as if the United States mint were his personal property."

It is easy to condemn Tabor. When, however, we consider his generous, easy-going character, his love for popularity, and, most important of all, his environment, we must admit that most men, had they been in Tabor's boots, would have acted in the same manner as he did.

Many writers have attempted to idealize the inhabitants of the Western mining camps. Bret Harte, in particular, with that faultless English of which he was such a master, limned a vast gallery of immortal portraits. Colonel Starbottle, Calhoun Bungstarter, John Oakhurst, Yuba Bill, Tennessee's Partner, Jack Hammond, Sandy of Red Gulch, Mliss, Cherokee Sal, Mother Shipton—these mining-camp characters will never be forgotten. But his stuff was fiction. There were other men who knew the California camps and their inhabitants as well, or better, than did Harte. But they lacked his great descriptive power and gift of character delineation, hence their printed recollections are most tedious to read. As historical narratives they are, however, much more trustworthy than Harte's charming tales. These men found little that was romantic in the California camps. There was, likewise, little romance connected with Leadville after the early discoveries. Of those who arrived later, there were very few who labored to make it a decent town in which to live. The great majority were there for the sole purpose of gaining

money, by fair means or foul, and then departing. There were exceptions. Tabor, it is evident, actually loved the ugly, filthy, vicious, and corrupt little town. In a speech he made on May 7, 1884, to a group of business men who were endeavoring to raise funds to complete the new hotel, he said that nearly everybody who came to Leadville arrived with the idea of becoming bonanza kings and then departing. He appealed to the civic spirit of his listeners and asked them to do as he was doing—invest their surplus funds right in the town in which they lived.

Leadville was really Tabor's home town. While he afterward lived in Denver for many years, he often said that he regarded Leadville as his home—that the mountains, the hills, the valleys, around California Gulch were always as beautiful to his eyes as when he first viewed them as a young man in the summer of 1860.

Following the discovery of the Little Pittsburg, and the other bonanzas on Fryer and Carbonate hills, the camp boomed and boomed. While it became a great business center, it also gained a bad reputation throughout the country. In vice and corruption it far surpassed old California Gulch. It is doubtful if any of the other Colorado mining camps, or the temporary rail-head villages or cow-towns of the Plains, had such a large population of depraved and vicious characters as did Leadville in the '80s. The lower end of Harrison Avenue, State Street, the other streets near the Gulch—many were lined with saloons, gambling houses, variety theatres, dance halls, and the "cribs" of the harlots. There were other and larger buildings, usually two stories high, with closely drawn curtains, apparently deserted during the day, but which were brightly illum-

inated at night. These were the "parlor" houses, catering to the more wealthy or extravagant pleasure-seekers. Perhaps the best known of these resorts was Mollie May's. Other names that figure in the newspaper reports of that period were Sallie Purple, Frankie Page, and Mollie Price.

Strange were the nicknames given to some of the inmates of these resorts. In a newspaper account of a brawl in the segregated district, the lady involved was known as the "Lop-Eared Kid," and the man she blinded with a handfull of pepper was named "Pioneer Pete." It was said that her action in this affair was "generally deprecated by all her friends."

But the most notorious of all the Cyprians that ever invaded Leadville was the tainted New York beauty, Josie Mansfield. Once mistress of Jay Gould's partner, that bizarre crook, Colonel James Fisk, Jr., she transferred her charms to Fisk's friend, Edward S. Stokes. Failing in an attempt to blackmail Fisk, Stokes shot him to death at the Grand Central Hotel in New York on January 6, 1872. After a long legal battle, Stokes was convicted and served three years in Sing Sing.

According to the *Leadville Herald*, the fair Josie appeared in the silver camp in 1884, accompanied by a lover named Joe Howard. Unfortunately, the newspaper account is very brief, and does not say how long she remained in Leadville, and whether she was an inmate, a manager, or an owner of any house in the segregated district. Josie died in Paris in the fall of 1931. She must have been nearly a hundred years old, positive proof that the good die young.

Tabor liked good liquor, and he also liked to gamble, poker being his favorite game. Nor was he second to any

man in his admiration of a pretty woman. One of the various places he frequented when in Leadville was "Pop" Wyman's, located at State and Harrison. This notorious resort was one of the sights of the town that no male tourist was permitted to overlook. Here, under one roof, were combined liquor-selling, gambling, dancing and harlotry. Every night, miners and prospectors, mine owners and business men, teamsters and tourists, gathered in crowds at the long bar, or around the gambling tables. Tiring of these amusements, they would seek the dance-hall, where girls in short skirts, with bare arms and shoulders, with their full busts partly exposed, with hard and cold painted faces, were eager to dance—because every dance meant a drink, of which the girl later received half the price. If a girl was at all attractive, she could earn a good sum every night—which her lover would promptly lose at the gambling tables, or squander on other women.

Frequently, late at night or early in the morning, there would come trooping into Wyman's a "madam" and her retinue of girls from one of the "parlor" houses, to drink, to gamble, to dance with any of the more liberal patrons. The dance-hall girls viewed with envy these "ladies" in their magnificent dresses, and especially did they admire the madam, usually a stout woman of forty or fifty, with bleached yellow hair and glittering diamonds. Here was a magnificence they could never hope to attain. The madams and the inmates of the parlor houses were the aristocracy of the camp. Women of Mrs. Tabor's class, whose husbands had not found bonanzas, toiled at the wash-tubs or over hot stoves, cooking and washing for men who spent

many of their evenings gazing in admiration at the painted hussies in the "red light" district.

But the real tragedy of the segregated district of Leadville, a tragedy that had its counterpart in other towns and cities all over the country, was its influence on young people. There comes to mind a small town in Western Kansas, the young girls of which, as soon as they were old enough to wear long dresses, too frequently emigrated to Denver and made straight for one of the parlor houses on Market Street. So it was in Leadville. Too many young girls, of poor and middle-class families, dazzled by the jewels, fine dresses, and handsome carriages of the State Street "queens," impressed by the admiration these women received from most men, could not help but be filled with a desire to join the scarlet sisterhood.

The newspapers, apparently, did all they could to broadcast the infamy of the camp. Searching through the ancient files of the *Chronicle* and the *Herald*, one gains the impression that the tabloid newspaper of today is not a new invention. There was then the same striving for sensationalism that there is now. From time to time these newspapers would devote columns to descriptions of scenes along State Street—drinking, fighting, dancing, and general tumult, while the gamblers and other parasites took away the hard-earned money of the miner or teamster. Evidently it is a Saturday night orgy the reporter is describing in the following paragraph:

"The dance halls presented more allurements; the silly siren had on more hand paint than usual; the piper played with more tragic intensity; the fiddle was hoarser; and the herder (?) had evidently gotten a fresh

installment of wind in his bellows. . . . Resorts were the principal attraction and all of them did a general banking business cashing checks. At the Texas House, Opera House Club, Louis Mitchell's and the Board of Trade, the managers had stack upon stack of yellow darlings and thousands of them were passed over the case to miners who held checks and came up in files. State Street almost took on the dress of a time when it was swarmed every moment day and night. The gambling tables were obscured by anxious humanity, and the long bars were lined from end to end. The theatres were all crowded and business houses remained open until a late hour. It was daylight before, in the dance halls, the horns ceased their brazen music."

Muddy was the stream of immigration that poured into Leadville. The men far outnumbered the women. The 1880 census showed a population of about fifteen thousand, of which less than four thousand were women. Of the latter, it is doubtful if a quarter could be classed as respectable. Of the men, a considerable number were about as honest as burglars, and the majority seemed to have the moral standards of tomcats. For example:

Fifth Street, a block west of Harrison, was then a fashionable quarter. Here one bonanza king, whose descendents would not relish the printing of his name, erected a fine dwelling and installed therein his bleached-blond mistress and her staff of girls. His investment in this parlor house showed a good return for years, and he was proud of the fact that he was the owner of such a profitable business. Henry C. Butler, now editor of the *Leadville Herald-Democrat*, was then a young reporter. Suicides were frequent among the fallen women of the town. He called at this house to "cover" one of these

tragedies. He says he can still recall the ceilings in some of the rooms, on which a clever French artist had depicted, in a startlingly lifelike way, scenes most erotic in character.

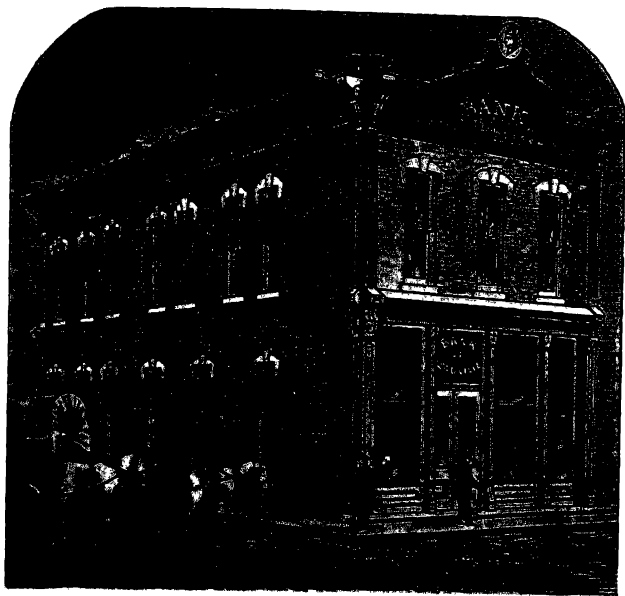
In the "cribs," the parlor houses, and the dance-halls, as the prosperity of the camp increased, there was a demand for younger and prettier girls. The financial rewards brought in many recruits, eager to "eat the bread of infamy and take the wage of shame." They came from all over the world, France being so well represented that there was soon a district given over entirely to French women.

The gamblers, the saloon-keepers, the inmates of the "red light" district, were a political power in Leadville and were protected by law. Gambling houses and saloons were then thought as necessary as grocery stores. The madams of the parlor houses were considered to be in a legitimate business. The inmates of the "cribs" also had their legal rights, upon which no one was supposed to infringe. All were protected because they paid a considerable part of the revenue of the city government. In 1884 the average collection was approximately \$2,000 a month, which about paid the wages of the police force of twenty men. In September of that year the saloons paid \$750; the gamblers contributed \$295; and the bagnios and the women of the streets enriched the town's coffers with \$550.

Such was the moral atmosphere of Leadville, and of these United States, in the '80s. Good old days? They were bad old days, thoroughly bad, so bad that the petty vices of today seem to be almost virtues.

So far as vice and corruption were concerned, there was little to choose between Leadville and Denver. In





*Tabor's Bank at Leadville, in 1879*



*Harrison Avenue, Leadville, in 1879*

*The large three-story building at the left is the opera house Tabor built. The hills in the distance are on the opposite or south side of California Gulch.*



Denver, Holliday Street became so notorious all over the West that the city fathers were concerned. As a step—the only step—toward reformation, they changed its name to Market Street. Not until years later, when the respectable women of the town had increased greatly in numbers and become a political power, was this ulcer wiped out. Then, at the Overland Park races, at the Tabor Grand Opera House, at the Tortoni restaurant, at other public places, no longer did decent women encounter painted wantons from the houses of the Jennie Rogers or Mattie Silks.

In 1881 there was considerable gossip in Denver that all was not well with Tabor's domestic relations. There was great surprise, however, when Mrs. Tabor brought suit for a property settlement. In her bill of complaint Mrs. Tabor said that in July, 1880, Tabor left their home, but continued to visit her now and then until January of the following year, after which she saw no more of him. A short time later, she testified, Tabor made overtures for a divorce, but she declined.

Mrs. Tabor did not sue for a divorce, although in the bill she said she had ample grounds, but she did ask that Tabor be compelled to settle \$50,000 annually upon her, and also give her the home on Lincoln Avenue, as well as some adjoining land.

The bill of complaint is interesting because of the list it gives of the Tabor holdings, which totaled over nine million dollars. Some of the larger items were the Tabor opera house, \$800,000; Denver National Bank stock, \$500,000; Matchless mine, \$1,000,000; Henrietta, Maid of Erin, and Waterloo group of mines, \$1,000,000; interest in Bull Domingo and Robinson

mines, \$1,000,000; half interest in the Tam O'Shanter mine, \$1,000,000; Government bonds, \$200,000.

In the schedule were other items of less value but of considerable interest. The old homestead on Deep Creek, in Kansas, with an adjoining quarter section of land, was valued at \$15,000; diamonds and jewelry were listed at \$100,000; the Lincoln Avenue home was considered to be worth \$100,000.

Mrs. Tabor said her husband was in possession of other property which she could not locate, and from information she had she believed his income was \$100,000 a month.

The schedule confirmed what most people knew of the Tabor fortune, but what aroused indignation was Mrs. Tabor's statement that her husband had contributed nothing to her support since January, 1881, and that she had been compelled to take roomers and boarders into her home to support herself. Nothing was said, however, about cows pastured on the lawn. Tabor afterward denied that she was without means. Evidently Mrs. Tabor had some money, but she said her investments had turned out badly and were then yielding but a small income.

Tabor's lawyers succeeded in having the suit quashed on the ground that it was not within the jurisdiction of the court. The lawyers on both sides now renewed their negotiations—to the profit of themselves, and the depletion of the estate. Tabor wanted a divorce, for a blond reason that will be dealt with later, but doubtless of which Mrs. Tabor was well aware. Mrs. Tabor would not consent to a divorce, but did want her husband to return to her or, failing that, to give her half the Tabor fortune.

It was over a year before the deadlock was broken. In January, 1883, Mrs. Tabor's lawyers surrendered and the divorce suit came to trial. Mrs. Tabor secured the unwanted divorce, also the Lincoln Avenue home and the La Veta Place apartment-house, and a cash settlement of an unknown amount. Tabor was the real victor, since he was now free to remarry. But his reputation suffered. Mrs. Tabor's lawyers brought out the fact that Tabor, by the liberal use of money, had already secured a secret and fraudulent divorce in one of the counties in the southern part of Colorado. This was so manifestly illegal that Tabor's lawyers had never brought it forward in their negotiations.

Tabor's political enemies did not overlook the opportunity the divorce suit offered. One Denver newspaper, in a scathing editorial, said he was a disgrace to Colorado, and should be driven from the State. There were other attacks, equally bitter, in other newspapers that opposed his political ambitions. The divorce suit was a factor in Tabor's first political defeat, which occurred about the same time the divorce was granted. This statement may be contradicted. One cynic, familiar with political affairs of that period, said that the Colorado Legislature then would have elected a yellow dog to the United States Senate if said dog were willing to spend more money than the other candidates. At this late day it is impossible to determine exactly what were the influences that brought about Tabor's defeat. Tabor said it was treachery. The cynic just quoted said that the truth was that the men Tabor bribed were, in turn, bribed by another candidate.

This senatorial contest had its inception in July, 1881, when President Garfield was shot by a disap-

pointed office-seeker, dying in September of that year. His successor, Chester A. Arthur, selected Senator Teller, from Colorado, to be one of the members of his cabinet. To fill Teller's office until the Legislature elected his successor, Governor Pitkin appointed George M. Chilcott, a mediocre politician. Although Tabor, and another wealthy mine-owner named Bowen, were anxious for the office, they were ignored by Pitkin, who aspired to obtain the seat when the Legislature convened.

The Legislature met in Denver in January, 1883. Its most important task was the election of two senators, one to serve for six years, and the other for the thirty days remaining of Teller's term. It was the unanimous opinion of nearly everyone that Tabor would secure the six-year office, even though Pitkin had the support of the regular Republican machine. While Bowen was a candidate, he was not regarded as a strong contender. Finally, after many days of balloting, and much speech-making, the Pitkin men realized that their candidate could not be nominated. We will never know what inducements they received, but on the ninety-seventh ballot of the caucus the Pitkin supporters voted for Bowen. These votes, added to the few Bowen controlled, defeated Tabor.

As a sop to Tabor, whom the Republican leaders did not wish to alienate, he was unanimously offered the short term. This seemed a poor reward for the money he had spent, and the efforts he had put forth, but Tabor was too good a poker-player, too experienced a politician, to long regret what was past. He congratulated the treacherous but successful Bowen, accepted the short term with good grace, and departed immediately for Washington, where early in February he took his seat.

Tabor was not a man whom a single political defeat could discourage. He had no illusions about his brief term as senator, but he believed that from it he could step to other political offices. Soon the time would arrive for the election of another senator, and before long there would be a campaign for the election of a governor of Colorado. Tabor believed that, with the experience he had gained, he could secure one of these offices. He immediately began to make plans with that end in view.

Tabor could now look back at his past career with considerable satisfaction. The erstwhile stone-cutter had traveled a long way from the Vermont farm where he was born. It was a great advance from being only a representative in a Kansas Legislature of doubtful legality to the proud position of United States Senator from the sovereign State of Colorado.

And those poverty-stricken years at Deep Creek, when frequently he had only ground corn to eat, when he went barefooted as much as possible to save the wear on his only pair of boots—they were in sharp contrast to his present luxurious surroundings, where all that money could buy was at his command.

It is likely that his mind dwelt on the later years. That awful journey across the Plains in '59; the sweat and toil required to cut that road through to Payne's Bar; perhaps regret that he did not fill full of buckshot that lying old claim-jumper—he came from Arkansas and looked like Tom Bowen; the terrific labor of surmounting Ute Pass with a loaded wagon; the narrow escape from starvation on the Arkansas; that appealing look in the eyes of his old oxen when at California Gulch he cut their throats (strange, but there seemed to have been much the same look in Augusta's eyes that day the

divorce was granted, and when she asked the court to write across the face of the document, "Granted against my wish"); then the long and lonesome years at Buckskin Joe and old Oro. But he cheered up when he recalled the bread he had cast on the waters at Leadville, which had been returned to him nearly a millionfold.

But undoubtedly what gave Tabor the greatest satisfaction was the unimpaired appetite he had for all those things he had dreamed about, and worked and struggled for, since he was a boy. They were now all within his reach. His cup was full to overflowing. Dame Fortune had more than fulfilled his dreams.

In his musings, did Tabor's mind ever dwell on Augusta? His first love; the bright, clever, handsome girl of whom he was once so proud? It would seem not. Another woman now filled his thoughts.

There is but one person alive today who can tell when or how it happened, but it was some time before the divorce suit that Tabor encountered a vision of feminine loveliness for whose favor he was willing and eager to sacrifice his wealth, his reputation, and everything he owned. The woman who can tell of her first meeting with Tabor, who indirectly cost him all these things, now lives in abject poverty, lonely and forgotten by the world, in a little frame shack close by the shaft-house of Tabor's greatest bonanza, the old Matchless mine near Leadville.



## THE MARRIAGE TO "BABY" DOE

IT WAS some time previous to the Civil War that an enterprising young Irishman named Peter McCourt emigrated to Canada. He had been born near the town of Armagh, in the north of Ireland, on June 4, 1818. McCourt did not long remain in Canada, coming to the United States in about 1855. He first resided in Utica, afterward in Buffalo and Milwaukee, and, finally, in Oshkosh, where he died on May 14, 1883. He was a tailor by trade, had a clothing store in Oshkosh, which failed, after which he returned to tailoring. From all accounts, he was an honest, sober, industrious man. He married young and was the father of fourteen children, several of whom died in infancy.

All the McCourt children were intelligent. One daughter, Elizabeth, not only had as keen a mentality as any of the other McCourt offspring, but Nature was kind enough to present her with the gift of remarkable beauty. She was also blessed with a musical voice, a winning personality, and a keen Irish wit. To all these was later added a vaulting ambition.

While still in her early teens, Bessie McCourt was recognized as the belle of Oshkosh. There was no other girl so handsome, so vivacious, with such a flow of wit and humor, or with the ability to wear ordinary clothes with the air of a duchess. It is not surprising that the male sex, from young boys to doddering grandfathers, fell easy victim to her charms. There was a seduc-

tiveness to her smile, an alluring flash to her eye, a brilliance to her repartee, that set her apart from all other girls. Obviously, she was never very popular with her own sex; nor is it likely that she was much inclined to seek their favor.

The inevitable soon came to pass. When about eighteen Bessie was married to a young man named Harvey Doe, son of W. H. Doe, who at one time had been a wealthy lumberman. The marriage was opposed by the elder Doe, who made some bitter but untruthful comments about the bride. Eager to better their fortunes, the young couple emigrated to Colorado, living at Central City for a time. The marriage was not a success, and it was not long before there was a separation, followed by a divorce, Mrs. Doe's charge being non-support.

At that time, 1881, there were few women in Colorado. Fewer still were those who possessed the sparkling wit and dazzling attractiveness of this young grass widow. She was then about nineteen years old. Her youth, her dainty blond beauty, her full and graceful figure, her vivacity and humor, the elegance of her dress, soon attracted attention. It was not long before "Baby" Doe, as she was then known, achieved a reputation throughout Colorado.

Another inevitable thing now came to pass—this young charmer met Tabor. When and where? There are many versions, most likely all untrue. Bill Bush, who was in a position to know, said it was in New York. This does not seem probable. It is more likely that they first met in Denver.

About the time of the Tabor separation, and before Augusta sued for a divorce, there were rumors among

Tabor's acquaintances, which meant nearly everybody in Colorado, that he was often in the company of "Baby" Doe. The men folks laughed at these stories, but they did not deny to their wives the truth of the tales. They had reason to smile. Tabor was fifty-two years old; Mrs. Doe was about twenty. Tabor was then believed to be one of the richest men in the world; Mrs. Doe had no financial resources, so far as anyone knew. Much more discerning in affairs of this kind were the weather-beaten wives of the old pioneers, many of whom had known Augusta Tabor for twenty years or more. These women, and their women friends, did not laugh, but they did unsheath their tongues. If words could have killed, they would have slain "Baby" Doe a thousand times.

Late in January, 1883, a divorced man, Tabor departed for Washington to take his seat as United States Senator. He was followed by the gibes of Eugene Field, then editor of the *Denver Tribune*, the owners of which were opposed to Tabor's political ambitions and permitted Field to give free play to a bitter and sarcastic pen.

Buried in the old files of the *Tribune* are many examples of Field's wit, humor, and biting derision that would seem worth reprinting in book form for the edification of the readers of today. Excruciatingly funny is his account of a mythical interview with Mrs. Brigham Young, whom he found to be not one woman but twelve. The virtuous and unwedded Emma Abbott, who played the opening engagement at the Tabor Grand Opera House, during her stay in Denver was doubtless entertained with the long and detailed accounts appearing in the *Tribune* every day about her

fictitious baby. Another yarn printed in the *Tribune* had as its victim the publisher of a rival newspaper, a respected and religious man. He had, according to Field, gone to New Orleans to report a prize fight, picked the winner and won a large sum, of which he was robbed by the toughs with whom he was associating, and closed his debauch by appearing at the Mardi Gras ball in a scandalous costume.

But Tabor was the mark at which Field loved to shoot. It was a dull issue of the *Tribune* that did not contain some exaggerated account of Taber's actions. Nor did he spare Tabor's son Maxcy, who had but a limited education. He once described a fictitious trip of Maxcy to Paris, where, amid the charms of the French ladies, Maxcy promptly forgot his native tongue, and his father had to employ a French professor to translate his letters describing his adventures in that gay capital. Next, the young man travelled to Venice, from where he wrote home that there must have been a flood in the town because all the streets were full of water. Of course, while in Venice Maxcy forgot all his knowledge of French, as well as his native tongue, and could write only in Italian. Field said that Tabor had no difficulty in reading these letters, having learned Italian from the Italian miners employed at the Matchless mine. So far as known, only Irish or Welch miners were employed at the Matchless.

It was during Tabor's brief term as senator that Field surpassed his previous efforts. Not an orator, or familiar with senatorial procedure, it is not likely that Tabor did much to attract attention. But if we are to take at face value the imaginary dispatches that Field

wrote for the *Tribune*, Tabor had Washington in an uproar during all of his term.

No one knows exactly how it originated, but while he was senator a story was circulated that Tabor was the possessor of a most magnificent nightgown that cost a tremendous sum. Field not only "featured" this story, but after Tabor's term had expired, whenever he was mentioned in the *Tribune*, Field was careful to see that he was dubbed "Ex-Senator Night Shirt." The nickname stuck. Years afterward, if a person happened to mention night shirts among a group of Colorado pioneers, someone would insist on telling the story of Tabor and the gorgeous gown.

Frequently there was a slight germ of truth in the wild yarns about Tabor that appeared in the *Tribune*, but Field must have been flabbergasted when on the night of March 1, 1883, the telegraph operator handed him a dispatch which said that Tabor had just married Mrs. Doe in Washington. Here was a cold, hard fact that made Field's imaginary accounts of Tabor's actions seem commonplace. No greater local sensation had ever appeared in the newspapers of Colorado. Newspapers throughout the country carried full details of the wedding. No item of importance was overlooked. It was the sensation of the day. As for the women of Colorado, and especially the women friends of Augusta Tabor, instead of their tongues wagging, they now buzzed.

Perhaps as good an account of the wedding as any is to be found in Bancroft's "Chronicles of the Builders." In this laudatory sketch of Tabor's life, doubtless prepared under the direction of Tabor, it is said that the bride's name was Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt, and that the ceremony was performed by Father Chappelle in

the parlors of the Willard Hotel at Washington. Among the guests were the President of the United States; Mr. and Mrs. McCourt, parents of the bride; Mr. and Mrs. Haben, sister and brother-in-law of the bride; and two brothers and a sister of the bride, Philip, Peter, Claudia; together with other relatives and friends of the McCourt family. No mention is made of the presence of any of Tabor's friends or relatives. Evidently it was strictly a McCourt affair. Tabor, however, was supported by his then close friend, Bill Bush, as well as his victorious political rival, Tom Bowen.

The Bancroft biographer waxed eloquent when describing the bride and her wedding gown—"a blonde of rare personal attractiveness . . . wore a décollete robe of heavy white brocaded satin trimmed with marabou feathers. The ensemble was striking, her exceptional beauty rendering the toilet brilliant in its simplicity."

In its account of the affair, the *Washington Post* said: "The bold originality of the method and hour of celebrating his marriage and the splendor of its surroundings are exciting much comment, and none that is not favorable to the senator's taste and independence. Those who have met him personally have learned to appreciate his amiable and frank character united to a clear, quick mind."

It is not likely the foregoing was written by a newspaper man. Most likely it was prepared by Bill Bush, whom Tabor employed for all kinds of tasks.

In its comment, another Washington newspaper described Mrs. Tabor as being one of the most beautiful women who had ever entered Washington society.

As befitting a Cræsus, Tabor's gift to the bride was truly magnificent—the most expensive diamond neck-

lace a New York jeweller could supply. Doubtless to pay for it required the entire output of the Matchless bonanza for six weeks or more.

Regardless of what her enemies said, and they were many, Elizabeth Tabor was a beautiful woman. C. C. Davis, a Leadville newspaper publisher, was not an admirer of Tabor, but in his book of reminiscences, "Olden Times in Colorado," he speaks of her abundant dark golden hair, large and expressive blue eyes, perfect features, beautiful mouth, and small regular teeth of dazzling whiteness.

Field wrote a nonsensical account of Tabor's last day as senator—of how all flags were at half mast, of how strong men wept, of the great parade in Tabor's honor, the marchers numbering thousands. He paid a sly tribute to Mrs. Tabor by describing a mythical Ship of State float whose crew numbered forty-one young and beautiful girls, *all from Oshkosh*.

There was an ugly aftermath to the Tabor marriage—toothsome bits of scandal that delighted Augusta Tabor's friends, and all of Tabor's enemies.

Father Chappelle returned the wedding fee, declaring the McCourt family had deceived him as to the previous marital status of both parties to the wedding, the marriage being contrary to the canon of the Catholic Church, and from a religious standpoint illicit.

Scandal also broke from another quarter. Soon the newspapers established the fact that Tabor and Mrs. Doe had been secretly married in St. Louis on September 30, 1883. This was three months prior to the granting of a legal divorce to Augusta Tabor, but after the fraudulent divorce Tabor had secretly obtained in Durango.

Tabor and his beautiful blond bride returned to Denver, to live for a time in a large suite at Tabor's hotel, the Windsor. They were greeted by a number of Tabor's men friends, but it is not on record that the women of Denver showed any desire to meet the bride. In Leadville, where business and political affairs demanded Tabor's attention, they received a warmer welcome. The camp prided itself on being free from those nice social distinctions that obtained in the effete cities of the East, and which Denver was now trying to ape.

To his dismay, Tabor now found that a new crop of political enemies had sprung up during his absence in Washington. Divorcing Augusta had injured his prestige. His association with Mrs. Doe had not added to his popularity, especially among the married women of Colorado. The marriage at Washington and the scandals which followed, were the last straw. Nearly every wife, it now seemed, demanded of her husband that he use all his influence to prevent Tabor from gaining a political office. Ever afterward, Tabor was defeated for every elective position he sought, despite the money he spent and the efforts he put forth.

Tabor's matrimonial troubles were not yet at an end. There were more scandals over which Augusta Tabor's women friends could gloat. It is said that it was at the instigation of Mrs. Elizabeth Tabor that Tabor quarreled with his man Friday, Bill Bush, and sued him for embezzlement. Bush was acquitted, and retaliated with a suit against Tabor for a hundred thousand dollars. It came to trial early in November, 1883. Expurgated extracts from the bill of complaint and the testimony can be found in the files of the Leadville



*Herald*. More details appeared in the Denver newspapers. Bush's complaint was stricken from the court records as being indecent and irrelevant.

Bush was an early arrival in Leadville, and was soon closely associated with Tabor. He leased Tabor's theatre in Leadville, was his partner in several mining deals, and later manager of Tabor's hotel in Denver. He had also been manager of the Tabor Grand Opera House.

During the trial, the ugly side of the Tabor divorce suit was dragged into the open. Augusta testified that Bush called on her a number of times in behalf of Tabor to secure her consent to a divorce. She would not agree unless she could have half the Tabor fortune. Bush testified that Tabor wanted him to dig up, or manufacture, evidence attacking Mrs. Tabor's character, which he claimed he refused to do. He did, however, ask for ten thousand dollars for services rendered in securing the divorce. He also asked for money for aiding Tabor in his courtship of and marriage to "Baby" Doe.

Among other items Bush sued for was additional compensation as manager of Tabor's theatre in Denver. Expert witnesses were called to testify. Charles Frohman, the New York theatrical manager, thought seventy-five dollars a week was enough. Lawrence Barrett, the famous actor, considered the job was worth twice that amount.

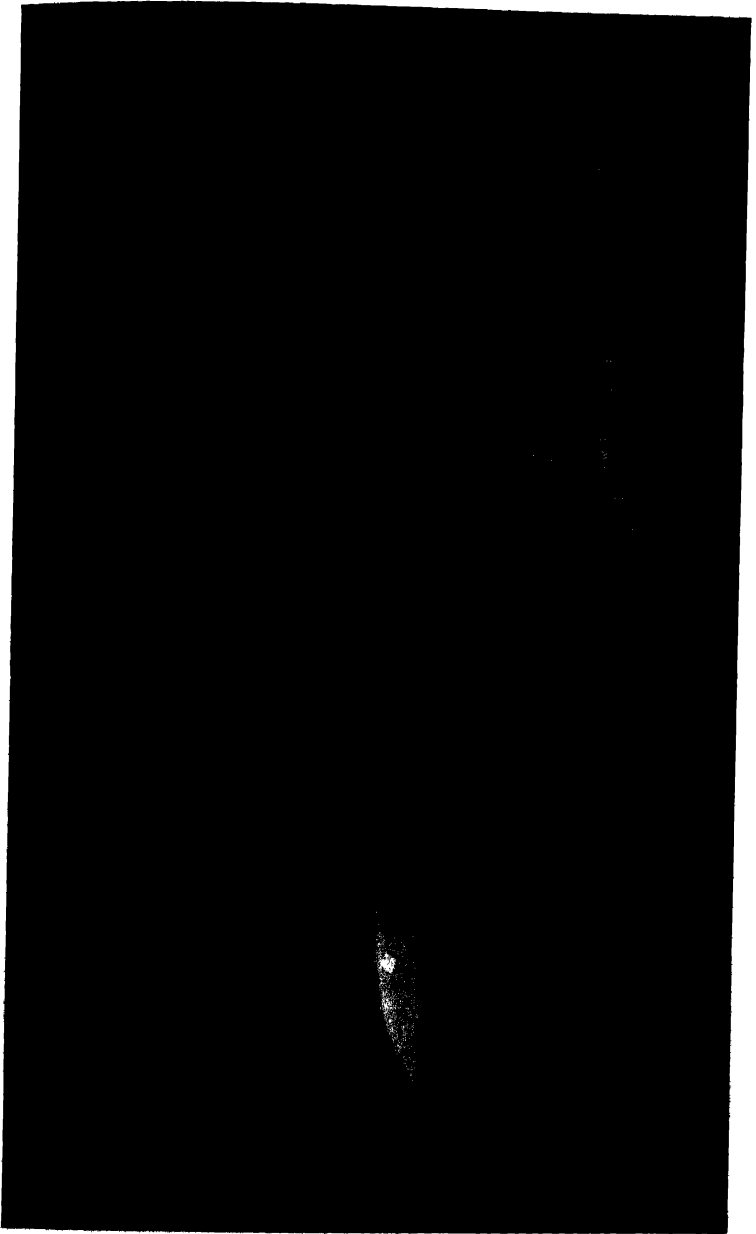
To offset Bush's claims, Tabor told of advances he made to Bush to pay debts the latter had contracted, usually in gambling houses or places of ill repute. Clifton Bell's hall of chance in the Tabor Theatre building was apparently the favorite "hang-out" of Tabor as well as Bush.

Despite the scandals connected with his marriage, and the newspaper attacks of his enemies, Tabor refused to retire to obscurity. The old files of the *Leadville Herald*, which he later purchased, have some mention of Tabor in nearly every issue.

Edward Cowan was then city editor of the *Herald*. On September 14, 1883, he was attacked in a saloon by Alderman Joy, an underworld politician. Cowan was so badly beaten that it was thought he would die. Two days later Tabor and his wife arrived in Leadville, and the *Herald* mentions that they spent some time in the room of the injured man. There was some talk of lynching Joy, but eventually the affair was forgotten.

Joy, from all that can be learned, endeavored to emulate some of the exploits of the infamous Slade, once superintendent of the Overland Stage Company at Julesburg, Colorado, and of whom Mark Twain said, "From Fort Kearney, west, he was feared a great deal more than the Almighty." By dint of a heavy fist and ready revolver, Joy retained his political job for years, eventually becoming known as Leadville's perpetual alderman. Drunk or sober, he could always bluff any man who opposed him, and at that time there were many men in Leadville who were not easily frightened. Nemesis, in the form of a woman, at last met him face to face. Applying in his home those methods of intimidation which had always been so successful in gambling houses and saloons, on March 30, 1900, his wife beat him to the draw and wounded him so badly that he died the next day. In Evergreen Cemetery at Leadville a large granite block marks his grave.

Over a quarter of a century had now elapsed since Tabor had fired a rifle in warfare, but he had not forgot-



MRS. ELIZABETH McCOURT TABOR



ten those stirring days in Kansas when with a "Beecher Bible" he had fought to keep that Territory free from slavery. Therefore, on September 28, 1883, we find him, accompanied by the gorgeously gowned Mrs. Tabor, occupying the Tabor private box at the Tabor Opera House in Leadville, and giving close attention to a lecture by the famous divine, Henry Ward Beecher. In its account the *Herald* said there was a slim attendance. Beecher was now an old man, past seventy, and had outlived his fame. Scandal, too, had besmirched him, and the whole world was aware that he was of but common clay. But he was still a great orator. John Hay said, "he was the greatest preacher the world has seen since St. Paul preached on Mars Hill." Tabor was as thrilled by his words as he had been by the Beecher speeches he had read so many years ago. Interesting indeed must have been the meeting, after the lecture, of these two men. Crusader and disciple, years before they had been united in a common cause. They had much about which to talk. John Brown, whom they both knew and admired; Horace Greeley; Lincoln: all the men who had a prominent part in the overthrow of slavery—Beecher had known them for years, knew their virtues and their shortcomings, and could discuss them with a keenness and sound judgment that Tabor had never before encountered.

His matrimonial law-suits were not the only legal actions Tabor had to defend. For years he was constantly engaged in litigation. The total of the lawyers' fees he paid out during his lifetime must have amounted to a huge sum. Many of these suits had to do with his mining operations. One that engaged a notable array of lawyers on each side was over the famous Maid of

Erin mine. Tabor was one of the four owners of this bonanza. These men applied for a patent on the adjoining Vanderbilt claim, but were opposed by another group of men who claimed the Vanderbilt was their property. After three years of litigation, the Tabor group won and secured possession. This was in February, 1884.

On March 11, 1884, Tabor brought suit against the owners of the Dolphin mine, which adjoined his famous bonanza, the Matchless. Tabor claimed that part of the Dolphin belonged to the Matchless, but the court held to the contrary. The Dolphin owners then sued Tabor for four hundred thousand dollars, claiming that to be the value of the ore Tabor had extracted from the Dolphin. A settlement was made for an amount not on record.

A presidential year, 1884 was a crowded one for Tabor. Much of his time was devoted to political affairs. There was some talk among politicians and in newspapers about nominating him for president. An obscure newspaper, *The New Jersey Statesman*, published in Bayonne, N. J., carried the following "banner" on its editorial page:

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HORACE A. TABOR Silver King of the Pacific  
Coast, Colorado's Citizen, Banker, and Senator of  
Sterling Merit and Purity of Character.

AN INDEPENDENT STATESMAN UPHOLDING  
THE CONSTITUTION AND THE UNION

A Foe to Monopoly and Centralization of the Money  
Powers Endangering Liberty. Favoring a Gold and  
Silver Currency and Protection to the Manufacturing  
of the Country. Champion of the Working Man. A New  
Light from the Ranks of the People.

The *Denver News* quoted the above, with the comment that Tabor would make as good a candidate as any man the Republicans could choose. Many other newspapers endorsed this view, but the politicians knew that Tabor was not of presidential caliber, and his matrimonial mishaps alone would be enough to defeat him. There had been enough scandals in the Republican Party. The two Grant administrations had been one long era of corruption. Not much better had been those of Hayes and Garfield. Arthur had, however, restored to the presidential office some of its former dignity. But the whole country was tired of the Republican Party and its administration of public affairs. Its leaders therefore chose the strongest man they had, James G. Blaine; but with Grover Cleveland heading their ticket, the Democrats won.

It is not likely that Tabor gave any thought to the presidential nomination, but that year he made a hard fight to be nominated for Governor of Colorado. The Leadville delegation was solid for Tabor, and he had a large following from Denver. But in the convention, at Colorado Springs, he encountered much opposition because of his "social history," his divorce and remarriage being thought a handicap that might result in the election of a Democrat. The supporters of the three other candidates—Routt, Teller, Chaffee—combined and nominated Ben Eaton. Thus, once more, did the goddess of political fortunes ignore Tabor.

While his political schemes came to naught, Tabor was blessed in other ways. The Matchless swelled its silver flood, it being then at the height of its production. In April over five hundred tons of ore were shipped to Pueblo. No record of its value is obtainable, but that

month a new ore body was opened up that yielded 1500 ounces of silver to the ton. Silver at that time was selling for \$1.10 an ounce.

Tabor now was much engrossed in his foreign investments. On April 28, 1884, there appeared in the Leadville *Herald* an article dealing with some of these enterprises. In an interview Tabor spoke of an immense holding in Texas, over a hundred thousand acres, which he believed was rich in copper ore. He also mentioned a vast mahogany forest in Honduras, part of a rich concession he had obtained. He said he was planning to erect a large residence in Denver and intended that it should be built throughout of solid mahogany. This concession included every alternate section of land, bordering each side of the Patuca River, for several hundred miles. On this land, Tabor said, were immense groves of mahogany, ebony, and other valuable woods, banana and other tropical-fruit orchards, as well as gold, silver, coal, and other mineral deposits. The concession also embraced a mineral grant in the interior of nearly two hundred square miles.

The next day the *Herald* printed more details of this "Eden" in Honduras, which was described as flowing with milk and honey. The concession was known as the Republic of Honduras-Campbell Reduction Company, Tabor being the president. During the interview Tabor showed some specimens of gold ore from a Mexican mine in which he was interested. It was located in Chihuahua, over a hundred miles from a railroad, and the only method of transportation was by burros. But the ore was of great richness and thousands of tons were in sight. Tabor was confident that this mine would



prove to be a second Matchless and yield millions of dollars in profits.

Early in 1884, January 16th, young Maxcy Tabor was married to Miss Lou Babcock. In its account of the marriage the Leadville *Herald* said that Senator Tabor and his wife were present, as well as the Senator's former wife and mother of the groom, Mrs. Augusta Tabor. One of the Mrs. Tabors (the account is not clear) presented the young couple with a silver service of a hundred pieces. The other Mrs. Tabor gave them a furnished residence on California Street.

Was this the first meeting of the two women? How did they regard each other? Elizabeth was then twenty-two years old—younger and far more beautiful than the bride. Augusta was past fifty, and looked her age. At the time no woman in Colorado was spending as much money on her wardrobe as Elizabeth, and no woman in the country could wear an expensive gown with more ease and grace than this blond young beauty. Augusta never spent a cent for clothes, or any other purpose, except when absolutely necessary.

As she watched the bridal couple, Augusta's mind must have traveled back to her own wedding day; to the honeymoon trip from Maine to Kansas; to the wretched little one-room cabin that was her first home as a bride; to the birth of the sickly baby who had since grown to the tall young man before her; to the years of hardship and danger that followed the departure from Deep Creek; to the recent and sudden flow of wealth that had poured in on Tabor and her; and, finally, to when she found herself supplanted by the young fashion-plate at her side. Age brings to us all a philosophy of some kind that makes life endurable, but it must have been a

considerable strain on Augusta's equanimity to have enjoyed this wedding.

Elizabeth had no philosophy to call upon, nor did she need any, to enjoy this marriage. It was toward her, and not the bride, that all eyes were turned. What woman does not like flattery and admiration? Elizabeth was now receiving more than her share of these two aids to feminine happiness. She had a devoted husband who lavished on her more money than she could spend, as well as all those little attentions so dear to the feminine heart. What if he was more than twice her age and declining into the vale of years? These years rested lightly on his broad shoulders. He still had the light step of youth, as well as a strength and endurance that amazed her. Nor was he bored with the things she enjoyed. He was as eager as was she in the pursuit of that evanescent happiness which money can always obtain.

Elizabeth noted that whenever she appeared in public all men gazed at her with admiration. What if women made no effort to conceal their hatred and envy? Since a little girl she had been accustomed to the venomous glances and acid comments of her own sex, but these were always offset by the admiration of every man on whom she flashed an intriguing smile. It was a man's world in which she lived, and she knew that as long as she could rule men, and one man in particular, her position was secure. It seemed impregnable. At that time every business venture Tabor made was successful. His mines, and other interests, were yielding a large income. She was free to dip into this golden flood as often or as deeply as she choose.

Mrs. Tabor's near relatives benefitted by her marriage. Shortly after the event the elder McCourt gave up

his tailoring business and removed from a small and unpretentious house in a poor quarter of the town to a comfortable and well-furnished home on the lake shore. Later, when he died, the magnificence of the funeral was a subject of newspaper dispatches.

One of Mrs. Tabor's brothers, Peter, was given the position of secretary to Tabor, and handled his business affairs for many years. Afterward he became business manager of Tabor's opera house in Denver, as well as the Broadway Theatre in that town. He was a shrewd business man and left a considerable fortune when he died in the spring of 1929. It was reported that the estate amounted to about a half-million dollars, but all that Mrs. Tabor received was some worthless stock in a carriage manufacturing concern.

The happiness of the Tabors was increased when on July 13, 1884, their first child, a girl, was born. Among other presents showered on the new arrival was a gold medal, on which was inscribed, "Baby Tabor, July 13, 1884." On the reverse was the inscription, "Compliments of the Tabor Guards, Boulder, Colo." The medal was accompanied by a letter congratulating Mrs. Tabor and announcing that the child had been adopted as the daughter of the company. On behalf of the employees of the Matchless mine, and in a flowery speech, J. S. Scanlan presented to Tabor, for the benefit of the baby, a gold-lined cup, saucer, and spoon.

This daughter, Elizabeth Bonduel Lillie, was noted for her beauty, but was not as famous in that respect as her younger sister, who was born December 17, 1889. For some reason this child was given the weighty name of Rose Mary Echo Silver Dollar, and the baptism was

on July 30, 1890, at the Denver Catholic cathedral on Stout Street.

According to all the rules and regulations laid down by old women since Adam and Eve were in their dotage, the marriage of Tabor to "Baby" Doe should have failed. First predictions were that it would not last a year. When twelve months rolled around and there was no apparent break, another year was added to the prediction. When ten years had elapsed and two children had been born, when the financial crash came and Mrs. Tabor did not desert the sinking ship, those who had so often prophesied disaster had to admit that their predictions were wrong.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FINANCIAL CRASH

SO MUCH fiction has been written, and told, about the early days of Leadville, and the later career of Tabor, that it is almost impossible to determine the exact truth concerning many of the happenings. Not much dependence can be placed on the recollections of men, now bent with age, who lived in Colorado at that time. The human memory, at best, is most uncertain, and when it attempts to bridge a gap of half a century or more it is no longer reliable. And there is often an intuition, when talking to many of these pioneers, that not only were they great liars in their youth, but with the passing of time they have gained a certain plausibility that makes their most impossible yarns ring almost true. It is only when their statements are checked by reliable contemporary records that it is realized how far they depart from the truth. Perhaps they are not willful fabricators. One asks for the truth about a certain event. The truth is likely to be most uninteresting, so what is told is a small morsel of fact richly garnished with fiction. For example:

Many who have written of the pioneer days of Leadville have emphasized the frequency of the murders. The newspapers of that period also dwell on this point. While there was much vice, thievery, robbery, and corruption, murders were not more frequent than they are today in any large city. The average seldom exceeded one a month. Only one man, Marshal O'Connor, was

slain in 1878, seven in 1879, thirteen in 1880, five in 1881, and nine in 1882. The total of all of Lake County, from 1878 to 1885, was forty-nine.

The legal hanging of a murderer, which anyone could then witness, always attracted great crowds. Executions were in charge of the sheriffs of the various counties, who sent out printed invitations to brother officers in other counties to attend such events. One that took place in Denver in July, 1886, brought about a riot, due to the frantic efforts of the huge crowd to gather close to the gallows. The mechanism of the gallows worked badly and it was over an hour before the victim was pronounced dead.

Of the various executions in Leadville, the one that old pioneers recall most clearly was the hanging of Si Minich on Feb. 5, 1886. He had been tried and convicted for the murder of Samuel Baldwin. The motive was robbery and the victim was ambushed and shot down in cold blood. The gallows was erected on a knoll west of the town and close to the Boulevard road. This instrument of death, which was built by Eugene Robitaille, cost \$135, was of improved design and worked perfectly, the victim being pronounced dead in less than eight minutes. It was afterward taken apart and stored in a loft over the jail, "to be kept until needed." It was never used again.

The body of Minich lies in the potters' field at Evergreen Cemetery. Not far away are the graves of Frank Gilbert and Merrick Rosengrans, hanged simultaneously from the same gallows. Gilbert was convicted of the murder of a teamster in his employ, James McCullom; and Rosengrans of the murder of an old prospector named John Laing.

It was the accidents in the Leadville mines that took a greater toll of life. The greed of the mine-owners, who attempted to pay big dividends on excessive capitalizations, often prevented the proper timbering of shafts and tunnels and the installation of other safeguards so necessary in such a dangerous occupation as mining. To these perils should be added the carelessness of the miners themselves, who did not always take the precautions they should. The list of the killed and maimed is a long and bloody one.

But for every life snuffed out by revolver or accident, King Alcohol took many more. Then the liquor was almost as vile as it is today. Bad housing, bad food, lack of sewers, general filth—all contributed their share and brought about epidemics of small pox, typhoid fever, and other diseases, with the result that there were soon over two thousand graves in Evergreen Cemetery. This was a high ratio for a population of less than twenty thousand, the majority of whom were young men.

The files of the newspapers of that period are not an infallible guide to the searcher for truth. Then the reporters, like the tabloid news-gatherers of today, were usually more anxious to obtain an interesting story than to publish the facts about any event of importance. By the alchemy of words, the ragged owner of a barren prospect hole was always a wealthy mine-owner; the discovery of any kind of ore body, a find of unbelievable richness.

The day-by-day newspaper records of ordinary events are, however, usually free from exaggeration, and from them some sort of more or less truthful picture can be drawn of the later years of Tabor's life, including the financial crash.

During 1885 Tabor's name did not appear in the newspapers as often as in previous years. The "Baby" Doe scandal had about ceased to be a topic of conversation. While Tabor's mines and other investments continued to yield a large income, he was no longer meeting with spectacular success with the unproven mines or prospect holes he was buying from time to time. Considerable interest was aroused, however, when early in the year he announced that he was again a candidate for United States senator. The *Denver Times*, in its comment, said it was a free-for-all race with no entry fee, and that Tabor was eligible for the post. Other Colorado newspapers, recalling the senatorship battle of two years before, which was so costly to all the candidates, were not so sure that there would be no entry fee. The contest was an expensive one for Tabor, and, as before, the other candidates united against him and the prize was lost.

Tabor continued to be bothered with law suits. In April, 1885, G. Collins brought action against him for an interest in the Matchless mine, which Tabor then valued at five million dollars. Collins claimed that in 1879 he had a contract with Tabor for the purchase of the mine, the agreement being that Tabor was to deed him an eighth interest, providing the mine paid a certain amount over and above the cost of opening it up and operating it. The Matchless was then an unproven prospect. Tabor had a staff of able attorneys. It is not likely that Collins obtained enough money to pay the fee of his lawyer. In the early days in Leadville there were many actions of this kind, mine-owners frequently paying considerable sums to be saved the annoyance of spending tiresome hours in a crowded courtroom.



Tabor, however, was always willing to defend in court any attacks on his possessions, and seldom did he compromise with an opponent.

But Tabor had little reason to worry over law suits or political defeats during 1885. He continued to prosper financially, as did the Leadville mining district. Late in November the *Chronicle* said that during that year the camp had mined and shipped more ore than in any previous twelve months, and that more men were employed in the mines than ever before.

It was also in November that the *Herald* devoted considerable space to a new mining camp near Leadville, called Winfield. Twenty mines were in operation there, the richest being the Uranus, which had made a shipment of ore to Leadville that averaged over two hundred ounces of silver to the ton. The Uranus was part of the Bear group of mines, which Tabor controlled, and he told the reporter that early the next spring he planned to build a concentrator to handle the ores of the district.

A problem that was now beginning to worry the Leadville mine-owners, as well as the entire camp, was the approaching exhaustion of the high-grade ores. Except in the Matchless, the values began to fall off at an alarming rate. There was plenty of low-grade ore, however, but there seemed to be no way to recover the silver at a cost that would yield a profit. On November 13th the *Herald* said that Tabor was quite enthusiastic over a newly invented ore concentrator for the treatment of low-grade ores, and which he thought would be the salvation of the Leadville mines. Tabor was always much interested in ore-treating methods and the cyanide process cost him about a hundred thousand dollars or

more, considerable of this sum having been spent to erect a plant in Denver to handle ores by this process.

It is probable that by this time Tabor was about through sowing those wild oats which had so injured his reputation among the women of Colorado, as well as among many men who were doing in secret the same sort of things for which Tabor had been so strongly condemned. He was now past fifty-five, had been a wealthy man for seven years, and had a young and beautiful wife and an infant daughter to whom he was devoted. He still continued to do a certain amount of gambling—poker games with ten-thousand-dollar jackpots, if one is to believe the yarns of certain old-time sports. But it is likely that by now the pasteboards began to lose their fascination. Years before he had gained considerable pleasure, and also profit, from his contests with professional gamblers but, no longer needing the money to be gained at the card-table, he did not play the tight, cautious game he did at old Oro or Buckskin Joe. It is also quite likely that the gamblers he encountered at this time were much more skilled than the "tin horns" that twenty years before he could beat with ease. The result was that now he was frequently "trimmed" for large amounts. Soon he abandoned poker, except for occasional games with friends for small stakes. No longer did he "buck the tiger" for large sums in the open gambling-houses of Leadville and Denver.

The second Mrs. Tabor undoubtedly did what she could to wean Tabor from gambling and from associating with men whom she did not approve. She had a very clear conception of the job before her, which was to place Tabor in the position of being the leading citizen

of Colorado. It would seem likely that she was chiefly responsible for Tabor's many attempts to gain a high political office. It may have been that she had this end in view when she made no attempt to hide her own light under a bushel. Her gowns, her jewels, her horses and carriages, the lavish manner in which she dressed her daughter, the elaborate entertainments she gave—these were the envy of many other women in Denver. And in the silk-lined Tabor box at the Tabor Grand Opera House, which was banked with flowers to grace her presence, she attracted as much attention as any of the famous beauties who appeared before the footlights. And their number included Lillian Russell, then at her zenith, as well as lesser luminaries.

But Mrs. Tabor craved a more impressive place in which to live, and to entertain her friends and relatives. By this time Tabor had evidently abandoned the idea of building a residence of solid mahogany obtained from his concession in Honduras, and about which he was so enthusiastic in 1884. Two years later a suitable home was on the market, and he bought it for the bargain price of fifty-four thousand dollars. It was a large mansion, with fountains and statues gracing the lawns and gardens, and cost much more than the sum Tabor paid for it. The plot covered half a block, from Sherman to Grant Streets, facing Thirteenth Avenue, and was then in the best residential section of Denver.

"Baby McCourt's bower," as a malicious old woman recently termed it, was built in 1880 by Joseph Watson, an early bonanza king of Leadville. He was one of the three owners of the Morning Star, located a short distance south and west of Tabor's Matchless. Here rich ore was struck in 1879, and a year later Watson con-

sidered himself wealthy enough to build the finest mansion in Denver. Six years later, hard pressed for cash, and with a thirty-thousand-dollar "plaster" on his home, Watson was glad to sell it at a price fixed by Tabor.

Now installed in a more elaborate home than that in which Augusta Tabor dwelt, Elizabeth could rightly consider that she had "arrived." Evidently she did not worry about the gossip of the older women of Denver. She was well aware that she was much more beautiful than any of her critics, that she was better dressed than they could ever hope to be, and that whenever she chose she could fill her home with the leading *men* of Denver. If the wives of these men refused to call on her, that was not a matter of any great concern. She noted that these absentees were quite willing to copy her gowns, her hats, or any distinctive features of her dress.

The Tabors did not lack for company in their new home. In those days motion pictures were unknown and the theatrical profession prospered. Every New York success, after its run in that city, went on the road. Eventually, all the great stars in the theatrical firmament appeared at Tabor's theatre. The people of the theatre were not as narrow-minded as the women of Denver. They welcomed the opportunity of attending Mrs. Tabor's receptions, where they were sure to be served with the best food and the choicest of liquors. Tabor now had a nation-wide reputation, hence tourists who visited Denver were also anxious to meet Tabor and his young and beautiful wife.

Thus, for a period, did Tabor and his wife live as they both dreamed they would when they were young. Elizabeth's youth had been girded with poverty, as bitter as that of Tabor's, but when the time came when

she would most enjoy it, the good fairy waved the magic wand and, presto! all her dreams came true.

They were then blissfully unaware of it, but the Tabors were to dwell in the Watson mansion for only a few short years. Already, small cracks could be discerned in the Tabor financial structure. For a good and sufficient reason, Tabor had never kept his finances in a "liquid" condition. Better than any bank was the Matchless mine, which could not be robbed, or fail because of unwise investments or the dishonesty of bank officials. Whenever he needed money for any purpose, Tabor had but to increase the production of that bonanza and the silver stream gushed forth. It had never yet failed him. There seemed to be no limit to the wealth concealed within its depths.

With the Matchless as a backlog, Tabor did not deposit in banks or tie up in low-yield securities that part of his income he did not spend. All the surplus was used to purchase other mines, to develop mines he already owned, or was invested in other enterprises that gave promise of yielding great profits.

The New York stock market, the Chicago grain market—these absorbed a share of Tabor's income. His political ambitions cost money—in 1888 he made another futile but costly effort to gain the governorship nomination. His personal expenses were also very heavy, the Sherman Avenue home costing a small fortune every year. No certain date can be fixed, but it was about 1887 that Tabor found himself walking a financial tight-rope on which it was difficult to keep his balance. The chief reason for this was the declining output of the Matchless. By 1885 many of the bonanzas on Fryer Hill were exhausted, the output of the camp being maintained by

a score or more of rich mines on Breece and Carbonate hills. Eventually, the Matchless had to join the ranks of the other gutted Golcondas on Fryer Hill. After yielding fabulous profits for many years, it began to pay less and less. The main shaft was sunk deeper and deeper, and levels were pushed out in various directions, but the search was in vain. Nowhere could there be found a profitable ore-body.

Other mines in which Tabor was interested now began to decrease their output. Many of his investments in other fields also turned "sour." Unfortunately, he could not, or would not, slacken his heavy expenditures. Soon, many banks were holding his notes. Next, he began to mortgage his real estate and other holdings, including the Matchless, which continued to yield a reduced income.

Thus Tabor drifted along for several years, becoming more and more involved, but showing a bold front to the world. Only certain banks, and a few of his business associates, knew how bad was his financial condition. But Tabor did not seem to be greatly disturbed about his finances. He continued to live in the Sherman Avenue home, and there was little or no reduction in the large staff of retainers. With her two daughters beside her, Mrs. Tabor continued to be a striking and attractive figure in her open carriage on Sixteenth Street, or in the Tabor box at the Tabor Theatre. As optimistic as he had ever been, Tabor felt sure that it would not be long before there was a turn for the better. His Denver real estate holdings were increasing in value—he then valued the Opera House block at two million dollars. If but a single one of his mines would come through with a big

strike, he could soon pay off his obligations, and have a surplus of several million.

Tabor was not alone in his hopeful attitude toward the future. Optimism permeated the entire country, and it was perhaps more marked in Colorado and the West than in the Eastern states. Denver was especially prosperous; many large store and office buildings were being erected, as well as thousands of homes. The population of the country, and the national wealth, were increasing at a tremendous rate. There was not a cloud on the financial horizon.

The prosperity of Denver was but a reflection of the good times all over the country. The nation-wide boom had its culmination in the World's Fair at Chicago—the greatest event of its kind the world had ever known. There was, however, much political unrest, neither the Republican nor the Democratic parties having the full confidence of the voters. This resulted in the formation of the People's Party, which gained a million adherents in the 1892 campaign and elected four senators and eleven representatives to Congress. Following Cleveland's inauguration in 1893, there was a long period of panic and business depression, including a costly railroad strike and the march of Coxey's Army to Washington.

To those living in Colorado it seemed that the brunt of the panic fell on that State. As a result of the repeal of the Act authorizing the purchase of 4,500,000 ounces of silver every month, the price of that metal fell to a low level. The silver-mining industry of Colorado was dealt a blow from which it has never fully recovered. Business was prostrated. There were wholesale bank failures. Real estate values shrunk to the vanishing point. Wages dropped to almost nothing. Skilled workmen could be

obtained for a dollar or two a day. Ordinary laborers were glad to work for their meals and a place to spread their blankets. Almost a clean sweep was made of the fortunes of the bonanza kings, as well as the wealth of nearly all who had invested in Colorado enterprises. The remnants of the Tabor fortune also disappeared, and eventually the beautiful home was lost, and all of Mrs. Tabor's wonderful jewels and handsome gowns were taken by the creditors.

In the days of his prosperity, when he was "rolling 'em high," Tabor was not a character to be greatly admired by straight-laced moralists. But when adversity overtook him, when he was struggling against hopeless odds, one could but admire his courage and optimism. He was now well past sixty, and burdened with a wife and two small children, as well as a horde of pensioners. The latter were compelled to shift for themselves, Mrs. Tabor mended her spendthrift ways, and Tabor resolutely set himself to win a new fortune. It was disheartening—the efforts Tabor eventually had to put forth to feed his family and keep a roof over their heads. Neither his wife nor he were strangers to poverty, but the two little girls, born in a luxurious home, had to endure hardships for which they were ill prepared.

Many of Tabor's enemies rejoiced over his downfall. Especially gleeful were some of the women, who now predicted that "Baby" Doe would soon desert her husband. They were mistaken. There was stern stuff under Mrs. Tabor's fluffy exterior. She faced the dark future as hopefully as did Tabor.

At one time there was a possibility that Tabor would weather the storm. W. S. Stratton, once a poor carpenter, had gained a large fortune from a gold mine in



the recently discovered Cripple Creek district. He loaned Tabor thirty thousand dollars, without security, for developing a group of mines in that camp. The fund was exhausted before pay ore was encountered. Thus, once more, did Lady Luck refuse her smile.

The headlines in the Denver newspapers epitomize Tabor's misfortunes. A story of column length, appearing in 1894, is headed, "Tabor Fails." Shortly after there was printed a dispatch telling of a Tabor mine in Arizona being sold at auction. By 1896 he had lost nearly all of his once great possessions. In 1897 there appeared a rather pathetic account of his troubles entitled, "Back to the Pick and Shovel." Then, as now, there were few pick-and-shovel jobs open to a man nearly seventy years old.

From rags to riches, and from riches to rags—Tabor had now rounded the circle and, financially, was back to the point from whence he started a half century before. But it was not the same Tabor who again had to take up the tools he had wielded so industriously at Payne's Bar in the summer of '59. While they could not quench his valiant spirit, the years had taken heavy toll of his body. His career was now drawing to a close. Two more years and he would know the answers to all those questions which had recently been perplexing him. Why was he now scorned by Lady Luck? Why had he failed to gain political office? Why had his wealth vanished so completely? Why did every fresh effort he made to gain a competence come to naught? These were riddles he could not solve. And because there was no solution, he began to lose some of that buoyant outlook on life which had helped him over so many obstacles.

There were other questions which troubled Tabor. Not only had his fortune tumbled down, but the world in which he lived was also falling to pieces. What was wrong with all his old friends? Those tough pioneers of '59 who had so often escaped death that they seemed destined to live forever? Now they were as brittle as thin glass. The least exertion, perhaps only a few drinks of good corn liquor, and they took to their beds—from which they were too frequently taken by the undertaker. Not only were they dying much too rapidly for Tabor's peace of mind, but their places were being taken by a strange breed of younger men, many being consumptives from the East, who knew little, and cared less, about what Tabor and his contemporaries had accomplished. Their ways were not his ways. They drank strange liquors—a white whiskey from Scotland that smelled bad and tasted worse, or concoctions fashioned from that nigger liquor, gin. And many smoked cigarettes, of a foul-smelling Turkish tobacco; they did not know the pleasure and contentment to be gained from chewing the weed. But worst of all, they pinched their pennies; always wanted to know the cost before they bought, and would not lend a dollar to a friend without security. And they were lone wolves when they drank their liquor. To Tabor, who always asked everyone at the bar to join him when he took a drink, these solitary drinkers were a breed he could not understand. Less did he understand the new generation of women who talked glibly but vaguely of their "rights," and how they were soon going to vote and be elected to political offices and manage everything.

Heresy was rampant in Colorado at that time and many of the old political and financial leaders were

being tumbled from their pedestals. It was perhaps well that Tabor passed from the stage when he did. He would have been as much out of place in Colorado after 1900 as a horse and buggy would be on the streets of Denver today. He belonged to, and reached full stature in, the ox-team era.

## SUNSET AND EVENING STAR

PENNYLESS and without friends, Tabor now had reason to be discouraged but he did not openly complain. There is no need to describe the straits to which he was reduced. C. C. Davis, his old Leadville enemy, said that in 1897 he saw Tabor wheeling slag in a wheelbarrow at the Globe smelter, ten hours at a stretch, for three dollars a day. This is denied by a nephew of Tabor's, who was in Colorado at that time. It is known, however, that in the fall of that year Tabor was working with pick and shovel, searching for an ore body in the Eclipse mine near Ward, Colorado.

Finally, in 1898, there came a turn for the better. Old political hatreds began to die out. Because he had struggled on without complaint, people began to view Tabor in a more kindly light. His political enemy of years before, Senator Wolcott, aided by Senator Teller, now did a gracious and friendly act by procuring from President McKinley the appointment of Tabor as postmaster at Denver. Tabor deserved it. While postmaster at Leadville in 1879 he paid out of his own pocket thousands of dollars for clerk hire to take care of the sudden increase in postal business at that office. Later, in Denver, he had given to the Government a large plot of ground on which to erect a postoffice. In addition, Tabor had contributed thousands of dollars to the Republican organization in Colorado at a time when the political leaders were badly in need of funds.

Tabor did not long enjoy his new position. At the Windsor Hotel where, with his family, he had a small apartment, on April 10, 1899, Charon tapped him on the shoulder. He was buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery, near Denver. This cemetery has since been abandoned. Several years ago the stone marking the Tabor grave was blown down and shattered by a wind storm. The broken pieces are now hidden by the weeds and grass that overrun the plot.

Augusta, the first Mrs. Tabor, died in Pasadena, California, February 1, 1895. The body was brought to Denver by her son Maxcy and buried in Riverside Cemetery. She left a considerable estate.

Maxcy Tabor died in Denver a few years ago.

The death of Tabor brought a change for the worse in the financial condition of his wife and the two daughters, the elder then being fifteen and the other nine years old. They did, however, manage to keep the wolf from the door. A few years later the older daughter married and went to live in Milwaukee. Through the generosity of Stratton, who had paid off the mortgage, Mrs. Tabor now owned the empty Matchless mine. Perhaps it was to guard this treasure that Mrs. Tabor and her other daughter returned to Leadville, to live in a one-room shack close to the hoisting-plant of the old Matchless. The winter months were usually spent in Denver, where Lily tried her hand at literature and song-writing, but without much success. Later she drifted to Chicago, where she died in 1925 from accidental scalding. Because of the prominent position her father once held, some of the more "yellow" newspapers hinted at scandal and murder. The man accused of the crime was soon released. The funeral was paid for by Mrs. Tabor's

brother, Peter McCourt. Mrs. Tabor declared at the time that her daughter was not dead but safe in a convent she had entered some time before.

Thus Father Time has dropped the curtain on all, or nearly all, who participated in this century-long drama. Elizabeth Tabor, the once charming, witty, ravishingly beautiful "Baby" Doe, still lingers on a stage long stripped of all its glory. For a quarter of a century or more she has lived in that little house near Leadville. She shuns all contact with the world, and the people of Leadville are inclined to leave her alone with her memories.

Mrs. Tabor has made many attempts to reopen the Matchless, clinging to the belief that the mine still contains ore that would yield a profit. All her efforts have failed, and in April, 1927, the property was sold to satisfy a mortgage she had placed on it. The present owners are the Shorego Mining Company. They have made no attempt to work the mine or evict Mrs. Tabor from her little home.

North of Stray Horse Gulch, up a steep grade, and about a mile east of the business section of Leadville, is the old Matchless, flanked on either side by the Duncan and Robert E. Lee mines. The latter was as great a bonanza as the Matchless. Adjoining the Matchless on the south is the Dolphin, the owners of which once sued Tabor for a large sum. Farther south, across the gulch, is the famous Maid of Erin, from which Tabor and others reaped millions. A short distance to the west of the Matchless is the Little Pittsburg. Adjoining it are the Dives and Little Chief. South and west of these now empty Golcondas is the New Discovery, where George H. Fryer, early in 1878, made the first strike on that hill

which has ever since borne his name, and who was partly responsible for Hook and Rische locating the Little Pittsburg. West of the Little Pittsburg are two other Tabor bonanzas, the Crysolite and Little Eva. All of these mines are within a short distance of one another and can be visited in an afternoon. They are not in operation. Years ago the huge ore bodies were exhausted.

South of Stray Horse Gulch is Carbonate Hill, now covered with abandoned shafts, shaft-houses, and other mining structures. Here once were a score or more of rich producers. Deep under its surface, and at various depths, are miles of drifts, cross-cuts, winzes, and levels, as well as huge stopes from which every pound of ore has been taken. Adjoining Stray Horse Gulch, and west of the Maid of Erin, cheek by jowl, lie the Henriette, Waterloo, Morning Star, Evening Star, Catalpa, Crescent, and Yankee Doodle. These all loomed large in the early history of the camp. The greatest producer was the Morning Star. In 1880 its output was a hundred thousand dollars a month. Adjoining the Yankee Doodle is the famous old Glass-Pendery, which yielded millions to its owners.

To the south and east of Carbonate is Iron Hill. Here are several of the original Wood and Stevens claims—Iron, Bull's Eye, Lime. Close to the latter, and adjoining California Gulch, are the two claims which were the foundation of the Guggenheim fortune—the A Y and Minnie. In 1886 eighty men were employed and the output averaged a thousand tons a month.

South of California Gulch are several empty bonanzas. Close to where Abe Lee washed the first pan of gravel in 1860 is the Rock mine, where the carbonates were first discovered. Adjoining it is the Dome, another

Wood and Stevens claim. Next comes the Crown Point, and beyond is the Pinnacle. These two claims were yielding about fifty thousand dollars a month in 1886. The owners were Joe Reynolds and J. D. Morrissey. Reynolds was known as "Diamond Joe," because he wore more and larger diamonds than any other man in Leadville. Morrissey was an Irish immigrant who could neither read nor write. When his wealth began to pour in, he married a schoolteacher, who endeavored to give him the rudiments of an education. It was a hopeless task. Compelled to choose between a schoolroom in his home and barroom that never closed, he clung close to the latter. Before long there was a separation, followed by a divorce. Morrissey soon squandered the remainder of his fortune on loose women, liquor, and at the gambling tables. Later he became a county charge, and when he died his wife paid for the funeral.

Not far from the Crown Point and Pinnacle, but north across the gulch, is the entrance to the great Yak Tunnel. This huge bore penetrates Iron Hill and beyond for a distance of four miles. It is perhaps the largest mining enterprise in the Leadville district and through its portals have passed millions of tons of ore. The Yak has been responsible for much of the output of the old camp since the carbonates were exhausted, and, as the shafts were sunk deeper, the sulphide ores were encountered. It had its inception in the early days when it was decided to drain the Silver Cord mine and handle its ore from a tunnel driven from a low elevation in California Gulch.

In the summer of 1929 the writer spent a few hours revisiting the Matchless, and other abandoned mines on Fryer Hill. Especially interesting was a



conversation with George M. Schmidt, then watchman at the Matchless, and Mrs. Tabor's last faithful servitor. He was a dwarfed and eccentric old miner, and lived in a little cabin close to the Matchless hoisting-plant. Years before he had worked in the Matchless when it was at the height of its production. He professed to know every foot of its extensive underground workings, and was as confident as Mrs. Tabor that the mine still contained millions of dollars' worth of rich ore; that if a shaft were sunk from a certain low level this ore would be encountered. Every day Schmidt inspected the old and rusted cables and machinery, and measured the depth of the water in the main shaft, meanwhile dreaming of the day when the mine would again be in operation and, with Mrs. Tabor, he would once more be riding on prosperity's tide.

Old George is no longer concerned with the fate of the Matchless. Early in April, 1930, he chopped some firewood for Mrs. Tabor and left it at her door, and then retired to his solitary cabin. The night was bitter cold, the temperature dropping to zero or lower. The next day Mrs. Tabor did not see Schmidt at his usual tasks. Toward evening she became alarmed and walked down to Leadville, where she notified Sheriff Walsh, and his deputy, Angelo Travison. They returned to the Matchless with Mrs. Tabor and, entering the cabin, found the frozen body of Schmidt in a chair close to a small stove. It is likely that finding it too cold to sleep in bed, Schmidt had dressed and built a fire, and then fallen asleep. The fire died out, and when awakened by the cold he

was so chilled that he could not cry for help or rebuild the fire.

Mention has been made of some worthless stock in a carriage company which Mrs. Tabor inherited from the Peter McCourt estate. She afterward said that five dollars would cover its value. Evidently others thought it was of some worth. On May 26, 1930, the administrator of the estate of T. L. Neighbor, and Mrs. T. S. Frantz, petitioned the District Court at Denver that this stock be sold to satisfy claims against Mrs. Tabor amounting to about three thousand dollars.

The *Denver Post*, on July 30, 1930, announced that Philip McCourt, a 71-year-old brother of Mrs. Tabor, had gone to Leadville to live with Mrs. Tabor in the little shack at the Matchless. This started a rumor that he intended to redeem the mine and put it into operation. The attorney for the owners of the Matchless, John H. Reddin, denied that the property had been leased or sold, and that the Shorego Mining Company had no plans for its operation or development. A few days later a number of workmen were busy installing a boiler at the Matchless, it being one removed from the Doty mine on Poverty Flat. Shortly after McCourt returned to Denver, and the incident closed when the workmen found it impossible to collect payment for their labor from Mrs. Tabor.

Thus ends for the present the written record of the Tabors. The story is not complete. Many things have been intentionally omitted; usually because they were only malicious gossip, frequently because the retelling would serve no good purpose. But enough has been said, the chronicler believes, to give

a fairly accurate picture of Senator Tabor and his two wives. It is also hoped that readers will gain from this tale some conception of the kind of men and women it took, and the hardships they encountered, to develop and civilize that vast region west of the Missouri River.

It is easy to criticise Tabor. In his day, no man in Colorado was more abused in the public prints, in barrooms and in gambling-houses, and at gatherings of women. Nor was Elizabeth Tabor spared—nor is she spared today.

But there was another side to Tabor's character, a side that was obscured when wealth was pouring in on him. That is why so much space has been devoted to his career in Kansas, to his trip across the Plains, to his adventures at Idaho Springs and California Gulch.

Tabor's wealth caused him to do many foolish things—for which he paid dearly. But his virtues far outweighed his faults. Never was there a more kindly and more generous man. In Kansas, when he was but a youth, he could give to those less fortunate only his time and his strength. His neighbors at Deep Creek in later years recalled how willing he was to serve them in any way he could.

And in the border ruffian days in that Territory—it took courage to play the part Tabor did to stem the tide of slavery. His fellow legislators have testified to his bravery and his wisdom.

Nor could a weakling have made that trip across the Plains in the spring of '59. True, Tabor had a wife as brave as he, and two men companions of equal courage, but his was the greater responsibility. They

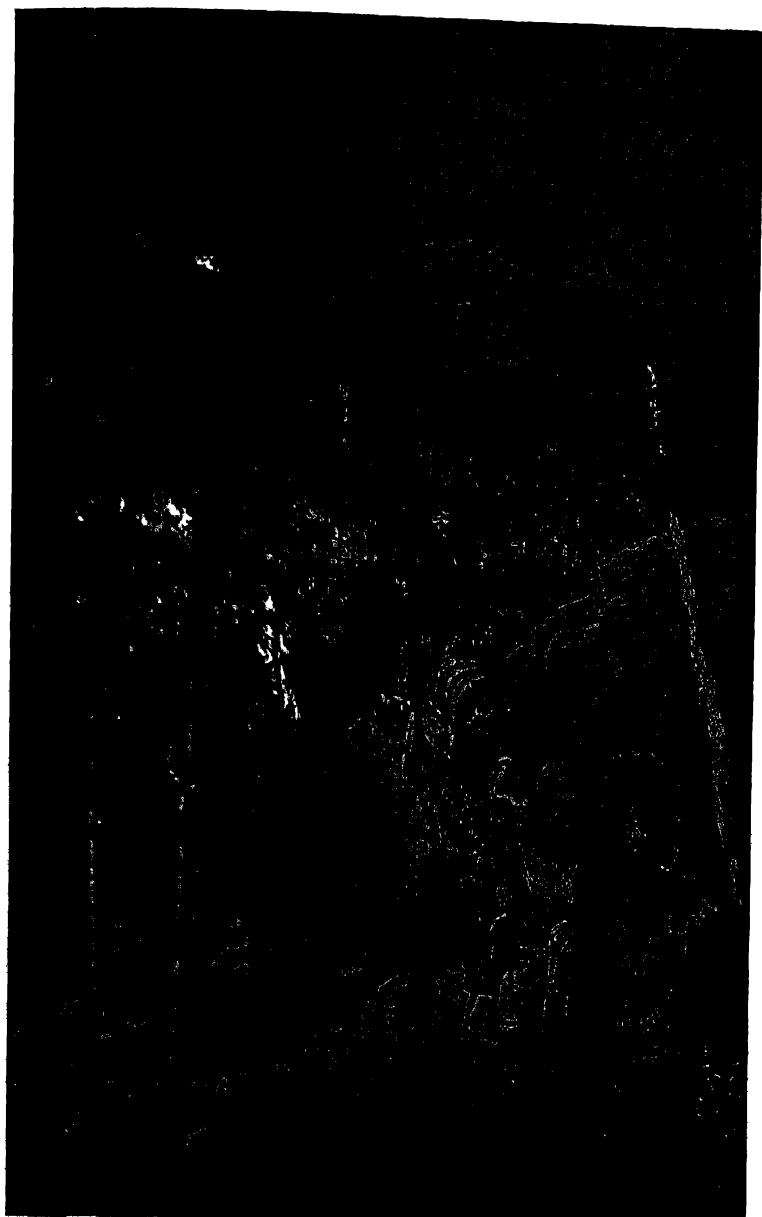
had only their lives to lose; he had a wife and child to protect.

And taking an ox-team and loaded wagon through Russell Gulch and into Payne's Bar was a task few men could perform. Here courage was not needed so much as strength and endurance, coupled with good judgment. Hundreds of trees had to be felled and dragged to one side, huge rocks had to be pried loose and removed, in many places a road had to be dug in the mountain side, and for tools they had only axes, picks, and shovels.

And that claim-jumping episode at Payne's Bar—it bespeaks Tabor's kindness of heart. Human life was then held cheap, especially where claim-jumping was concerned. Tabor could easily have slain the old miner, and the miners' court would have held him guiltless. But Tabor was not fond enough of money to kill a man in cold blood.

And that journey to California Gulch in the early spring of 1860. Here again was an adventure that called for reckless courage. While Tabor once more had the support of two men whose bravery, strength, and endurance he could depend on, he had the burden of a wife, a child, a loaded wagon, and an ox-team. Free of these handicaps, there is little doubt that instead of being twelfth, he would have been among the first on the ground when that rich placer was discovered.

And in his store-keeping days at California Gulch, at Buckskin Joe, at Oro, at Leadville—he then had little to give to penniless men, but seldom was one turned hungry from his door. If no food was available, then gunpowder and bullets for their empty rifles were handed out freely.



*Freighting to Leadville Over Mosquito Pass, 1879*



tion. North of Leadville, the two mountain ranges come together. On a clear day you can see the junction—a narrow gap, Tennessee Pass—which is flanked on the left by Galena Mountain, with Mount Zion on the right.

In the valley of the Arkansas, which here is about ten miles wide, there are many small streams. Nearly all once yielded gold in varying amounts, but California Gulch was by far the richest. It is on your right as you leave Malta. Drive slowly, for now you are on historic ground. Imagine, if you can, what this gulch looked like when the Tabor's first viewed it, over seventy years ago. Then the valley, and all the surrounding hills, were covered with a primeval forest. Is there a man alive today who saw California Gulch in all its vernal beauty? He would be ninety years old, or more, and faint indeed would be his memory of those wild, free days that followed its discovery.

You soon tire of this barren stretch of sand and gravel. Turn your eyes to the left, toward Leadville. Here before you is the famous old camp, now somewhat battered and run down at the heel. The road soon turns sharp to the left, and you enter a wide street, Harrison Avenue, one of Tabor's many gifts to the town. On the right is a shabby three-story building, the old Clarendon Hotel, opened in 1879 by Tabor's partner of later years, Bill Bush. Just beyond is the Elks' Home, once Tabor's famous opera house. Its doors opened November 20, 1879, with Jack Langhise in "The Serious Family." What ghosts must now haunt its old stage! Not all are ghosts. Effie Ellsler played here in 1884 in "East Lynn." She is still alive and not long ago appeared in a motion picture.

The first church in Leadville was Tom Uzzell's tabernacle. It was at Third and Spruce. The lots on which it was built were contributed by W. H. Stevens, and Tabor furnished the chandeliers. It was opened July 5, 1878.

One of Leadville's famous gambling-houses, C. Hall & Company, was at Harrison and Chestnut. In '79 it was the largest in Colorado. Also on Chestnut Street, and not far away, was Bill Nye's hall of chance. Here the town marshal Tabor appointed, George O'Connor, was murdered in 1878. It is said that Bloodsworth, who killed him, escaped because he stole the only horse in the town.

Above State Street, on Harrison, was another famous gambling-hall, the Texas House. Here Mart Duggan, whom Tabor appointed to succeed O'Connor, was killed in 1888. Duggan was an expert with a six-shooter, absolutely fearless, and always looking for trouble. He looked once too often. At the time of his death he was an alderman.

On Chestnut Street, close to Harrison, in 1878 Tabor built a huge building called the "Wigwam." It was used for political meetings and other public gatherings. Afterward it became a bunk-house and could accommodate a thousand sleepers, all in one room.

At Second and Harrison Pap Wyman had his infamous resort. In the barroom was a huge clock, across the face of which, in large letters, was the inscription, "Don't Swear." Below the clock, on a desk was always an open Bible. Wyman, in later years, ran a notorious roadhouse south of Denver.

At 110 East Second Street is an ancient two-story frame building of some historical interest. Here Charles



A. S. Vivian, founder of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, died on March 20, 1881. The body was interred in Evergreen Cemetery, where it remained until 1889, when it was removed to Mount Hope Cemetery, Boston. Vivian died in his thirty-fourth year.

The son of an English clergyman, and a noted ballad singer, Vivian arrived in New York in 1867. Such was his personality that it was not long before he knew nearly everyone in the theatrical profession in New York. Eventually Vivian and some of his friends formed a social organization which they called The Jolly Corks. In 1869 the name was changed to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

After a long engagement with an opera company, where he played the part of the Admiral in "Pinafore," in 1880 Vivian came to Leadville. Here he leased a theatre, which was renamed Vivian's Opera House, and formed a stock company to give legitimate productions. The venture was a failure. Since he did not offer liquor, gambling, dancing and association with wanton women, as did the other theatres, he had but few patrons. After a period of idleness, he was engaged as a monologist at the Comique. Later he was connected with Wood's Theatre, where he contracted pneumonia and died a few days later.

Vivian numbered his friends by the thousands. At that time no one was better known in the theatrical profession. Witty, intelligent, educated, with a genial and kindly nature, the soul of generosity, through the order which he helped to found his remarkable personality will never die.

In those days that part of Leadville close to California Gulch was the sporting section. Here the gam-

blers, the operators of low theatres, dance-halls, and saloons, and the army of scarlet women—all plied their various trades. Higher up on the hill, to the west, the town became respectable. At 216 West Eighth Street once lived Mary Hallock Foote, who wrote three novels dealing more or less with Leadville—"The Led Horse Claim," "John Bodewin's Testimony," "The Last Assembly Ball."

Farther up Harrison Avenue, on the left, is the famous old Tabor Grand Hotel, now the Vendome. Just beyond is the office of the *Herald-Democrat*, now Leadville's only newspaper. Henry C. Butler is the genial editor—the tales he recalls of early Leadville would fill volumes.

But a short distance away is the beautiful little church, St. George's, to which Tabor contributed three thousand dollars to the building fund. It is worthy of a visit. In 1885 there was a St. George's parish school, and a boy who took part in the graduating exercises on June 25th was Will Irwin, who has since gained fame as a writer. The essay he read that evening was entitled, "The Life and Services of General Grant." His brother Wallace Irwin, contributed a recitation. Will Irwin's novel, "Youth Rides West," contains a character, Chris McGrath, that was evidently drawn from Irwin's recollections of Mart Duggan, the pugnacious marshal who was always looking for a fight. Indeed, the whole book is redolent of the pioneer days in Leadville.

The foregoing is merely a cursory glance at the old camp. Henry Jett, the local taxi-driver, can lead you to the exact spot where Abe Lee washed the first pan of gravel from California Gulch, to where the mob lynched Stewart and Frodsham in 1879, to any other historical

point you wish to see. Farther afield, he can drive you to the Government Fish Hatchery, located in a wild and romantic glen, and on the way to which most excellent beer can be obtained. And he knows the location of all the famous mines, and how to catch the biggest trout at Twin Lakes.

While its population is now sadly reduced, Leadville is not a "busted" camp. A number of mines are in operation, producing gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, and molybdenum, amounting to several million dollars a year. According to the U. S. Geological Survey, the output of the Leadville District from 1859 to 1926 totaled \$435,000,000. As to the future of the old town, who knows? There are those who say that in its rock-ribbed hills is concealed more wealth than has been taken out in the past seventy-odd years, and that eventually a way will be found to uncover these remaining treasures.

Golden dreams? But no more golden than the air castles of those who swarmed over its hills and gulches a half century ago. Few realized their hopes, but for a brief space all who ventured into this wild camp were sure that their visions would come true. Do their ghosts ever return to the now deserted streets which once roared with traffic? Doubtless there are many old men who can dimly recall those days

" . . . back in seventy-nine,  
When every claim was a paying mine,  
When money and suckers both were thick,  
And prospectors sold without stroke of pick.  
Then the boys and the camp were thoroughbred,  
One got drunk and painted the other red,  
And maybe wound up half filled with lead."

Then, all during the day, the wide expanse of Har-

rison Avenue was jammed with wagons loaded with rich ores from the hills of Fryer, Iron, Breece, and Carbonate; with other wagons piled high with lumber from the near-by saw-mills; with long trains of freight-wagons bringing in food, liquor, mining machinery, and other supplies from Denver; with scores of stagecoaches filled with eager fortune hunters.

Then, all during the night, the streets of the town were filled with

“Men who had sifted the golden sands  
From the mountain peaks of many lands;  
Capitalist, criminal, tenderfoot, tramp,  
All drifted into the silver camp.”

Then the saloons, restaurants, and gambling-houses seldom closed. Then the brass bands and the orchestras blared from a score of dance-halls. Then men, made brave with liquor, quarreled and fought and shot and stabbed. Then the lurking footpad waited in many an alley. Then the Grand Union, the Coliseum, the Gaiety, the Olympic, the Canterbury, the Comique, the Belle Union, the Little Globe, the Chestnut, the Carbonate, and other dives masquerading as theatres, were packed every night. Then the “red light” district was red indeed, and crowded the long night through with men eager to squander their wealth on bleached and painted hussies clad in bright-colored Mother Hubbards.

In the Leadville of today there are still faint traces of that lawlessness, that reckless spirit, that once set it apart from all other mining camps. But these traces are dim. They exist chiefly in the minds of a few bent and aged men, no longer able to work in the mines or tramp the steep hills in search of the “mother lode,” but who, on summer days, gather along Harrison Avenue where

the sun can blaze down and warm their old bones. There they watch the whizzing automobiles of the tourists, infrequently they mumble to one another, and now and then they have visions—visions of days when they were young and strong, and the bite of raw whiskey was so comforting to their throats. These men, and that cheerful and optimistic old lady up at the Matchless mine, are all that is left of the Leadville that Tabor knew.



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